

# **Urban Regeneration**

**Through**

# **Cultural Values**

**A Normative Approach**

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## Abstract

In focusing on the influences of culture on urban regeneration, this research has attempted to show a broad perspective that looks beyond existing short-term urban policies. The history of Masjid-i-Soleyman, an Iranian oil-based economy city, which has passed its rich-oil days and is now suffering major social and economic problems, is used in this research as a suitable ground for a wider investigation into human capacity and urban life.

Reviewing the dominant approaches in both theory and practice showed that the analysis of urban problems had two main gaps. First, current urban studies and initiatives have mostly focused on economic urban outcomes and improving standards of living rather than on quality of life and considering the moral and cultural values as a goal and also a driving force for sustainable development. The second gap was the lack of attention given to a competent role to people in producing plans and decision making, as in giving them a real voice and a way of contributing to an improvement in their quality of life. The whole structure of the study has been based upon a premise that solutions to mounting urban problems are incomplete and ineffective without a consideration of cultural and traditional values beneath the surface of the contemporary city.

The “*human capacity building*” approach has been developed in this theses to emphasise that a *unifying* culture, in many societies, as in the case study area, acts as a *human capital*, can generate *social mobilisation* and cause environmental changes. “*People* “ are at the centre of this concept. In the model of “*the city as culture*” we develop this idea in the context of the city, emphasising the role of people’s culture in urban life, and underpinning the key elements (family, community, education, work and communication).

Considering such a conceptual foundation, we re-consider the evolution of MIS and the existing problem. This showed that the socio-cultural changes in the citizens of MIS, during 50 years of domination by foreigners over their lives, dramatically decreased both the human capability and social mobilisation of the society. The people who had previously built their environment had been changed in a way which allowed the



environment to build their lives. And the people with unified cultural values, social unity and strong social relations had been changed into individuals who sought their own preferences and maximised their own benefits. So, it has been emphasised that the decline of MIS had started many years before the exhaustion of oil; i.e., the decline had begun when the oil industry started to grow. Finally, with concentrating on “*knowledge*”, “*social relations*” and “*motivations*” as the key elements which increase “*social mobilisation*” in the society, the research suggests a strategic policy approach to achieve quality of life and urban regeneration in MIS.

This leads us to consider that economic regeneration alone will not bring prosperity to MIS, and similar cities; and sustainable development cannot be summarised in economic growth. Much greater attention must be paid to investing in human capital as an effective strategy for long-term socio-economic regeneration. Cultural factors such as traditions and social relations and family relationship must also be considered seriously. Such strategies should re-consider individuals, groups and communities, and be capable of providing an adequate sphere for people in order to enable them to feel confidence and self-esteem to be involved in building their future effectively, as active agencies rather than victims of the development and change.

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# Contents

ABSTRACT .....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	III
CONTENTS .....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES .....	VIII
LIST OF TABLES .....	X

## 1

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND KEY QUESTIONS .....	2
1.3 JUSTIFICATION .....	7
1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	9
1.5 THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODS.....	10
1.6 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH.....	13

## PART ONE: Identification

## 2

MIS: A CITY IN DECLINE.....	16
INTRODUCTION.....	16
2.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT .....	17
2.1.1 Khuzistan .....	17
2.1.2 Masjid-i-Soleiman (MIS) from an Ancient City to a Company Town .....	19
2.1.3 Social Background of MIS People (Bakhtiari Tribe).....	20
2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE OIL INDUSTRY IN IRAN.....	22
2.2.1 The Impact of the Oil Industry on Urbanisation in Khuzistan .....	25
2.2.2 The Positive and Negative Impacts.....	27
2.3 MIS AND THE OIL INDUSTRY .....	31
2.3.1 Oil and The New Emergence of MIS.....	31
2.3.2 The Physical Development of MIS.....	33
2.3.3 Oil Production .....	36
2.3.4 Employment .....	38
2.3.5 Demographic Changes .....	41

2.4 OIL EXHAUSTION AND URBAN DECLINE IN MIS .....	45
CONCLUSION .....	48

### 3

<b>URBAN REGENERATION: A TOOL OR A TARGET? .....</b>	<b>51</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	51
3.1. URBAN DECLINE .....	52
3.1.1. What is "Urban Decline"? .....	52
3.1.2. Causes of Urban Decline .....	53
3.1.3. The Consequences of Urban Decline .....	54
3.1.4. Theories .....	55
3.1.5. Empirical Research .....	60
3.2. URBAN REGENERATION .....	66
3.2.1. Background .....	67
Urban Regeneration Policy in the US .....	67
Urban Regeneration Policy in the UK .....	68
Urban Development Policy in Iran .....	70
3.2.2. Urban Regeneration and Property Development .....	78
3.2.3. Urban Regeneration and Housing Policies .....	81
3.2.4. Urban Regeneration and Cultural Policies .....	83
3.2.5. Urban Regeneration and Community Development .....	84
CONCLUSION .....	88

## PART TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 4

<b>HUMAN-CAPACITY BUILDING IN A HOMOGENEOUS SOCIETY .....</b>	<b>91</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	91
4.1 THE HISTORY OF PLANNING THOUGHTS .....	92
4.2 PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE .....	96
4.2.1 Knowledge, Value and Evaluation .....	97
4.3 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH .....	100
4.3.1 Ontology: The Concept of "Unity of Being" .....	100
4.3.2 Epistemology: Theological Hermeneutic Realism .....	102
4.4 SOCIAL THEORY .....	105
4.5 CULTURE .....	107
4.5.1 Cultural Diversity, Communication and Planning .....	109
4.6 THE HUMAN-CAPACITY BUILDING: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING .....	113
4.6.1 Individual, Society and Culture .....	114
4.6.2 The "Human-Capacity Building" Approach .....	117
4.6.3 Human Capacity, Social Relations and Social Capital .....	119
CONCLUSION .....	127

## 5

<b>THE CITY AS CULTURE .....</b>	<b>129</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	129
5.1 THE MODERN CITY.....	130
5.1.1 <i>The Modern Concepts and Theories</i> .....	130
5.1.2 <i>The Model of the Modern City</i> .....	133
5.2. THE POST-MODERN CITY.....	135
5.3. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO THE CULTURE CITY .....	139
5.3.1 <i>The Key Elements &amp; Indicators</i> .....	142
5.3.2 <i>The Dynamic Model of the City as a Cultural System</i> .....	152
5.3.3 <i>The Process and Outcomes</i> .....	154
5.4 THE PROCESS OF POLICY MAKING .....	155
CONCLUSION .....	159

## PART THREE: Data

## 6

<b>THE CITIZENS PART ( I ) THE SURVEY .....</b>	<b>162</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	162
6.1 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY.....	163
6.1.1 <i>The Hypotheses</i> .....	163
6.1.2 <i>The Conceptual model for Choosing Indicators</i> .....	164
6.2 THE SURVEY DESIGN.....	166
6.2.1 <i>Clarifying Research Questions</i> .....	166
6.2.2 <i>Developing Indicators</i> .....	167
6.2.3 <i>Designing the Questionnaire</i> .....	168
6.2.4 <i>Pilot Study</i> .....	170
6.2.5 <i>Sampling</i> .....	171
6.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS .....	172
6.3.1 <i>Socio-Economic Characteristics</i> .....	173
6.3.2 <i>Attitudes</i> .....	181
6.4 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....	201

## 7

<b>THE CITIZENS PART (II) DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>203</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	203
7.1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DATA .....	204
7.2 BIVARIATE ANALYSIS.....	208
7.3 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS.....	214
7.3.1 <i>The Logistic Model</i> .....	215
7.4 MULTI DIMENSIONAL SCALING .....	222
7.5 DISCUSSION .....	227

## PART FOUR: Alternative Solution

### 8

DEVELOPMENT, DECLINE AND THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN MIS .....	234
INTRODUCTION.....	234
8.1 THE PERIOD OF BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF OIL:.....	236
8.2 AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF OIL: THE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD .....	238
8.2.1 <i>Economic Changes</i> .....	239
<i>The Dynamic Model of the Socio-Economic Development of MIS</i> .....	239
8.2.2 <i>Physical Changes and Social Segregation</i> .....	242
8.2.3 <i>Occupational Classification and Social Segregation</i> .....	245
8.2.4 <i>Cultural Transformation</i> .....	250
8.3 THE PERIOD OF OIL EXHAUSTION (DECLINE PERIOD).....	258
<i>The Period After the Islamic Revolution</i> .....	258
8.6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....	262

### 9

THE STRATEGIC POLICY APPROACH .....	267
INTRODUCTION.....	267
9.1 REVIEWING THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH.....	268
9.1.1 <i>The Resources of Development</i> .....	270
9.1.2 <i>Social Capacity</i> .....	272
9.2 THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS .....	273
9.2.1 <i>The Goals</i> .....	275
9.2.2 <i>The Strategies</i> .....	276
9.2.3 <i>The Key elements</i> .....	278
9.3 THE ALTERNATIVE POLICY .....	279
9.3.1 <i>Community-Neighbourhood</i> .....	280
9.3.2 <i>Education</i> .....	283
9.3.3 <i>Work</i> .....	287
9.3.4 <i>Family</i> .....	289
9.3.5 <i>Media (Communication)</i> .....	289
9.3.6 <i>The Role of the Government</i> .....	290
CONCLUSION .....	291

### 10

CONCLUSION .....	292
10.1 INTRODUCTION .....	292
10.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE FINDINGS .....	296
10.3 IMPLICATION FOR ANALYSIS.....	299
10.4 CONCLUSION .....	302

REFERENCES .....	307
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#### APPENDICES

## List of Figures

FIG 1.1 THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE (I).....	11
FIG 1.2 THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE (II).....	12
FIG 2.1 THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF KHUZISTAN .....	18
FIG 2.2 THE LOCATION OF BAKHTIARI TRIBE IN IRAN .....	21
FIG 2.3 (A) THE HISTORICAL GROWTH OF MIS .....	35
FIG 2.3 (B) THE SITE PLAN OF MIS .....	35A
FIG 2.4 OIL PRODUCTION IN MIS 1912 - 1979 .....	37
FIG 2.5 THE OIL COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN MIS 1912 - 1991.....	38
FIG 2.6 EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN MIS 1956 - 1986 .....	39
FIG 2.7 MIS POPULATION 1912 - 1991.....	42
FIG 2.8 THE GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION, MIS AND NATIONAL 1956-1991.....	43
FIG 2.8 THE GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION OF MIS 1976 - 1986.....	45
FIG 2.10 STANDARD DIVIATION OF MIS URBAN INDICATORS FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE .....	46
FIG. 3.1 ORGANISATION OF PLANNING SYSTEM OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN .....	74
FIG 4.1 THE IDEAL MODEL OF HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH .....	118
FIG 4.2 THE HUMAN CAPACITY, CULTURAL VALUES, AND SOCIAL MOBILISATION .....	124
FIG 5.1 THE GENERAL MODEL OF MODERN URBAN LIFE IN THE WEST .....	134
FIG 5.2 A MODEL OF THE POST-MODERN CITY .....	136
FIG 5.3 THE DIMENSIONS OF URBAN LIFE IN THE MODEL OF CITY AS CULTURE .....	141
FIG 5.4 THE CONCEPTUAL BUILDING OF THE CULTURE .....	144
FIG 5.5 THE DYNAMIC MODEL OF THE CITY AS CULTURE .....	153
FIG 5.6 THE INTERACTION OF FACTS, VALUES AND REASON IN POLICY-MAKING .....	158
FIG 5.7 THE PROCESS OF POLICY MAKING .....	158
FIG 6.1 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SELECTING INDICATORS .....	164
FIG 6.1(A) THE INDICATORS FOR CV, SE AND AT .....	166
FIG 6.2 AGE STRUCTURE.....	173
FIG 6.3 EDUCATION LEVEL .....	174
FIG 6.4 OCCUPATION .....	175
FIG 6.5 MARITAL STATUS .....	176
FIG 6.6 THE SIZE OF FAMILY.....	176
FIG 6.7 MONTHLY EXPENDITURE.....	177
FIG 6.8 HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME? .....	178
FIG 6.9 IF YOU FIND A HOLIDAY OPPORTUNITY WHICH CITY DO YOU WISH TO GO TO? .....	178
FIG 6.10 WHERE WERE YOU BORN?.....	179
FIG 6.11 IF YOU WERE NOT BORN IN MIS, WHEN HAVE YOU MOVED IN MIS? .....	180
FIG 6.12 ARE YOU FROM BAKHTIARI TRIBE?.....	180
FIG 6.13 SCHOOL OR HOME? .....	182
FIG 6.14 JOB CREATION .....	183
FIG 6.15 JOB OPPORTUNITY PERSPECTIVE.....	183
FIG 6.16 THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN JOBS FINDINGS .....	184
FIG 6.17 IN YOUR VIEW, WHO HAS MORE CHANCE TO FIND A JOB IN MIS? .....	185
FIG 6.18 THE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN STARTING UP A SMALL BUSINESS .....	185
FIG 6.19 WORKING WOMEN.....	187
FIG.6.20 WHICH URBAN PROBLEMS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT IN MIS? .....	187

FIG 6.21 PEOPLE PARTICIPATION PERSPECTIVE.....	188
FIG 6.22 SATISFACTION WITH MIS .....	189
FIG 6.23 DO YOU WISH TO MOVE OUT FROM MIS? .....	190
FIG 6.24 WHAT IS THE BEST PUBLIC POLICY, TO TACKLE PROBLEMS OF MIS? .....	190
FIG 6.25 IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUPATION ARE YOU CAPABLE TO BE INVOLVED? .....	191
FIG 6.26 DO YOU WISH TO IMPROVE YOUR ACADEMIC EDUCATION LEVEL?.....	192
FIG 6.27 WHY DO YOU WISH TO LEAVE MIS?.....	193
FIG 6.28 WHY DO YOU AGREE WITH WORKING WOMEN?.....	194
FIG 6.29 WHY DO YOU DISAGREE WITH WORKING WOMEN?.....	194
FIG 6.30 COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS .....	195
FIG 6.31 TRADITIONAL INTERESTS .....	196
FIG 6.32 DO YOU HAVE TIME OR MONEY TO SPEND IN VOLUNTEER AID AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES?..	197
FIG 6.33 OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE AND RELATIVES ? .....	197
FIG 6.34 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU WISH TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AND RELATIVES?.....	198
FIG 6.35 RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND MORAL VALUES .....	198
FIG 6.36 CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A SPOUSE .....	200
FIG 6.37 DO YOU NORMALLY CONSULT OTHERS, IN YOUR MAJOR DECISION MAKING?.....	201
FIG 7.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIS'S RESIDENTS.....	205
FIG 7.2 PEOPLE'S CULTURAL VALUES, THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THEIR ATTITUDES .....	206
FIG 7.3 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SE AND AT AND CV .....	211
FIG 7.4 PEOPLE PART.= $F(\text{RELIG. BELIEFS, RELIG. PARTNER, M. EXPENDITURE, OCCUPATION,})$ .....	218
FIG 7.5 FAMILY ROLE IN JOBS = $F(\text{RELIG BELIEFS, M. EXPENDITURE, TRADITIONS})$ .....	219
FIG 7.6 SMALL BUSINESS = $F(\text{RELIG. CUSTOMS, RELIG. PARTNER, FAMILY SIZE})$ .....	219
FIG 7.7 TRADITIONS = $F(\text{M. EXPENDITURE, RELIG. BELIEFS, WORKING WOMEN})$ .....	220
FIG 7.8 RELIG PARTNER = $F(\text{RELIG. BELIEFS, TRADITIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL})$ .....	220
FIG 7.9 RELIG BELIEFS = $F(\text{RELIG. PARTNER, WORKING WOMEN, TRADITIONS})$ .....	221
FIG 7.10 RELIG. CUSTOMS = $F(\text{M. EXPENDITURE, SMALL BUSINESS, TRADITIONS})$ .....	221
FIG 7.11 BADNESS OF FIT FOR DIFFERENT DIMENSION .....	223
FIG 7.12 THE THREE DIMENSIONAL REPRESENTATION OF CV, AT AN SE VARIABLES .....	224
FIG 7.13 THE FIVE PERCEIVED CLUSTERS FROM MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALING .....	226
FIG 7.14 THE CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE OF MIS PEOPLE'S CULTURE .....	229
FIG 8.1 THE EVOLUTION OF MIS 1900-1996.....	235
FIG 8.2 THE CULTURAL VALUES OF MIS'S PEOPLE IN THE PERIOD OF BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF OIL ....	237
FIG 8.3 THE DYNAMIC MODEL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF OIL IN MIS..	240
FIG 8.4 THE RATIO OF THE NUMBER OF DIVORCES TO MARRIAGES IN MIS AND SHUSHTAR: 1965-1995	248
FIG 8.5 THE PERCENTAGES OF EDUCATED PEOPLE (MORE THAN 4 YEARS SCHOOLING).....	250
FIG 8.6 THE CONFRONTATION OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL VALUES AND MODERN ATTITUDES.....	255
FIG 8.7 CULTURAL VALUES, TRANSMITTERS AND PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES IN POST-ISLAMIC REVOLUTION	260
FIG 9.1 THE INTEGRATED PARADIGM OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION .....	271
FIG 9.2 CULTURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATEGIC POLICIES FOR URBAN REGENERATION .....	274
FIG 9.3 THE KEY ELEMENTS OF URBAN LIFE AND THEIR INTERACTION.....	278



## List of Tables

TABLE 2.1 IRANIAN AND FOREIGN EMPLOYEES OF THE AIOC IN IRAN, 1910-1950 .....	23
TABLE 2.2. POPULATION OF URBAN CENTRES IN KHUZISTAN, 1882-1956 .....	25
TABLE 2.3. KHUZISTAN: MIGRANTS AND NON-MIGRANTS POPULATION, NOVEMBER 1956.....	26
TABLE 7.1 VARIABLES, DEFINITION AND MEANS .....	208
TABLE 7.2 THE CROSSTABULATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS .....	216
TABLE 7.3 THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMICS & CULTURAL VALUES .....	212
TABLE 7.4 THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMICS AND ATTITUDES .....	213
TABLE 7.5 THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CULTURAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES .....	213
TABLE 7.6 THE RESULTS OF LOGIT MODEL FOR "PEOPLE PARTICIPATION" .....	217
TABLE 7.7 LOGIT MODEL RESULTS FOR "THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN JOB FINDINGS" .....	218
TABLE 7.8 THE RESULTS LOGIT MODEL FOR "ESTABLISHING SMALL BUSINESS" .....	219
TABLE 7.9 THE LOGIT MODEL FOR "TRADITIONAL INTERESTS" .....	219
TABLE 7.10 THE LOGIT MODEL FOR "CHOOSING A RELIGIOUS PARTNER" .....	220
TABLE 7.11 THE LOGIT MODEL FOR "RELIGIOUS BELIEFS" .....	220
TABLE 7.12 THE LOGIT MODEL FOR "RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS" .....	221

# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Cities as live phenomenon are born, develop, get old, some of them die, and some transform. During the last century considerable attention has been paid, by urban scholars, sociologists, economists and geographers to define, to explore and to explain both the nature and processes of the emergence, growth and decline of cities. During the last decades, a great number of cities around the world have suffered different types of socio-economic problems. In response to urban problems, numerous efforts have been made in both theory and practice in terms of planning and policies. In this context, during the last three decades, a large body of literature has concentrated on economic and socio-demographic dimensions of both urban crisis and of urban renovation policies (see chapter 3). However, so far little consideration has been given to the role of people, their attitudes and their cultural values, in this context.

The question of whether global or local economic influences have had the most significant impacts upon urban economies, has been at the core of many recent debates. Recently, literature, through many theoretical analyses and case studies, has demonstrated the importance of local initiatives and their capabilities in economic development (Blakely, 1989; Amin and Thrift, 1995; Islami, 1996).

To support the concept of local economic development rather than national development, many agree that whilst development is subject to favourable external factors it is not necessarily the outcome of external factors (Garofoli, 1990, Wilson, 1995). Further, some commentators believe that endogenous development must include non-economic factors. In fact, they must involve the evolution of human capacity and values. They emphasise the significance of endogenous potentials in local economic development. Some investigators attempt to combine anthropological and linguistic analysis into their blueprint for overcoming duality between life space and economic space (Freidman, 1988); and some concentrate on the combination of facts and values, but not in relation to economic development (Thomas, 1995; Forester, 1995).

This research seeks to contribute to the understanding of local economic regeneration in both the way it is carried out and the way it can be achieved by relating it explicitly to cultural values.

The story of Masjid-i-Soleiman, called MIS, as the first oil producing city of Iran and the Middle East region, is an obvious example of the emergence, growth and decline of a contemporary city, which can evidently show the accompanying processes of urbanisation and socio-economic changes.

It is important to distinguish between urbanisation as part of a process of social change and the city as a space in which these social changes occur. In the experience of MIS, both urbanisation as the process of social change and the emergence and development of the city have occurred simultaneously. Urbanisation has been an essential dimension of urban change throughout the world, and cities are also transformed by social changes. The urban transition experienced in MIS in the twentieth century represents one of the most important socio-cultural and economic changes in the history of contemporary Iran's cities.

## **1.2 The Research Problem and Key Questions**

The discovery of oil as the greatest event of the early 20th century, brought about substantial changes in Iran and particularly in MIS. During more than thirty years of massive oil production, alongside a great amount of economic benefits, political achievements and even military victory (in the Second World War), the new

city of MIS formed and developed rapidly. Some twenty years after the discovery of oil, almost all urban facilities and infrastructure had been provided in the city.

A remarkable numbers of jobs were created and the economy of the city grew very quickly. While all such economic growth was dependant upon the oil production, at the same time, a real socio-cultural transformation occurred in the society. The domination of the Oil Company over the city, which was controlled and authorised by European foreigners, brought about a remarkable socio-cultural change in the people. Westernisation of people's life style and the change in people's way of life from active self-sufficient producers to company employees and passive consumers was a clear sign of such transformations. At the same time, the occupational classification together with physical and environmental separation of urban facilities such as accommodation and shopping centres, led to social segregation in the city (see chapter 2). Some years later, the tragedy occurred. The oil resources of MIS fields were exhausted. All economic activities sharply declined, many jobs were lost, and the picture of the city suddenly changed for the worse.

Today, MIS is confronting serious social and economic problems. A high unemployment rate, a great number of low income citizens, inadequate urban services, lack of information, old urban infrastructure, and many closed businesses show visibly the existing situation of the city.

The context of this research is concentrated on MIS, as a city in trouble. The primary aim of this research is to investigate the link between social and economic dimensions of urban problems of MIS, and to develop the conceptual basis for an alternative policy for providing a quality of life and a sense of well being in the city. However, how will this substantial aim be achieved?. What are the criteria for quality of life? And through which window should we look at the problem?

In contemporary urban studies, some fixed and standard indicators have been determined by rational economists and planners, to measure the socio-economic situation of people around the world. These urban commentators believe that the quality of life and sense of well being are measured by particular economic statistics and demographic data such as GNP and exports and growth rates figures.

In this direction, much modern research and policy literature in urban policy has been concerned with understanding of structure and behaviour of urban and regional economies, i.e., socio-economic relationships and their physical expression in towns and associated rural areas. The other area of such studies concentrated on how such systems changed, and how they might be changed by some kind of manipulation, via environmental and economic rather than socio-cultural planning.

The present research emphasises that whilst we do need measures of economic performance, if they become the measures of well-being as well, we are in serious trouble. In other words people require the opportunity to build economies to suit their lives rather than structure their lives to suit the economy (Short, 1989). It seems that we require some new definitions of economic growth and its indicators to integrate individual goals and social interests to make human urban life sustainable and friendly to others and to the environment.

Two scenarios can therefore be identified for the future regeneration of MIS. According to the first Scenario, MIS should project itself again, as an oil city either in exporting petroleum or as a producer of oil dependent production. It should consolidate its function as a city with good centralised services, transportation, communication and infrastructure facilities. It is obvious that the government and national policies and strategies have substantial impacts in such a scenario or other similar alternatives. In other words, this scenario might be a part of the national strategic plan in which oil production and the development of related industries play a key role. This means that it needs a comprehensive government intervention with considerable financial resources and a long period of time in which to achieve the strategy. Also, the exhaustion of local oil resources is still a big problem for this scenario.

Many contemporary debates and much evidence demonstrate that the re-building of many urban economies as the result of national and international economic changes now requires a wider, more integrated viewpoint. But what is the content of such an integrated concept and how it will be achieved? It is now widely acknowledged that governments, whether local or national, cannot solve all the problems by themselves (Healey, 1997).

In the second alternative, which will be emphasised here, MIS should look for a model of development based upon "*endogenous*" strengths aimed more at meeting the potential and capabilities of local residents. The main economic policy objective in this scenario would not be restricted to external material resources. Rather it would focus on mobilising local resources of all kinds, including cultural values and the capacity of citizens. The research emphasises the role of cultural values, as the key element of people's lives, to increase 'social capital' in the area. According to this issue economic regeneration and socio-cultural development would appear simultaneously as inseparable objectives. This may lead to some people-government partnership in various kinds of urban policies and initiatives.

In this respect, and for many obvious reasons, such as the multidimensional nature of human beings as well as the interactions between various aspects of urban life, it will be inadequate simply to identify urban economic problems and the potential solutions as the main policy target through which to achieve quality of life and sense of well being, without considering people and their cultural values as well. This means that *facts* and the material worlds need to be considered together with *values* and the world of cultural perspectives and moral frames of relations.

The effects of culture on economic behaviour have been discussed in much literature in the last two decades, for example, the influence of culture in economic thought, such as the rational choice model (Smelser, 1992; Hodgson, 1988), or the effects of culture on production (Martin, 1992). However, little attention has been paid to showing the mechanism through which cultural influences affect economic activity. Also, in the context of the city, the role of culture and its associated values have not precisely been considered. Furthermore the analysis of urban regeneration studies shows two main gaps. First, current studies have mostly focused on the experiences of advanced economies in developed countries. This has led to a lack of accurate definition of urban decline and its causes and consequences in developing countries. The nature of multi-cultural societies in the western countries has led to the emergence of crucial concepts such as recognising and accepting cultural diversity rather than a unifying culture. Such an understanding of culture has been the basis of many alternative approaches to planning and urban regeneration policies (see chapter 4). Second, recent research on

culture as ways of thinking and acting has not deliberately shown the importance of culture in increasing social mobilisation for endogenous development, or as the driving force of urban economic regeneration.

Overall, the research questions of this thesis can be outlined as follows:

1) What are the inter-relationships between social, economic and cultural aspects of urban life in general, and in the evolution of MIS in particular?

2) Why should these inter-relationships be considered from a cultural point of view? And why do cultural values have a significant role in urban life?

3) What should quality of life and urban regeneration mean? What are the most significant elements of urban life and their inter-relationships, in a cultural context?

4) How can cultural values achieve socio-economic regeneration? What is the most appropriate policy recommended for the existing situation of MIS, the case study area of this research?

The research intends to investigate the extent to which the people of MIS have common and shared values, while at the same time they have some differences and variations in attitudes. If this is the case, in societies like MIS (at least), in urban regeneration policy we should consider people's cultural values, because these values are mostly shared, stable and effective. Therefore, such a consideration can assist the achievement of urban policies and strategies.

The empirical part of the research aims to investigate the characteristics of cultural values in the case study area, in order to explore its degree of diversity or unity; and then, to illustrate the role of such cultural values as the driving forces of socio-economic regeneration.

Analysing the cultural dynamics at the city level, we need to adopt an approach that explains the urban process as one of creating, transforming and transmitting cultural and moral values among society, and employing such values as the generator of social unity and social mobilisation as well as the driving force of human and

economic development. This process is viewed as occurring through three mutual dimensions: culture, socio-economic institutions and attitudes.

With this concern it is hypothesised that:

1) Despite the long experience of westernised development, which challenged local traditions, the cultural values and beliefs of MIS people are relatively unified and, for many, remain at the heart of their life and expression of their view of the world and history.

2) Such a unified and dominant culture can generate and increase the human capacity and social mobilisation in the MIS society, and improve their quality of life in both moral and material aspects.

### **1.3 Justification**

Reviewing the literature in the last few decades shows that urban studies in terms of policy making for urban regeneration have been mostly concerned with job creation, population change, physical development and finally economic growth. In defining and identifying the causes and consequences of urban problems, most recent literature has focused on economic and demographic indicators such as the production cycle, population change and migration, tax, income and unemployment rate (see Chapter 3).

Even in recent cultural policies and community development strategies, in most developed countries, the target is economic development rather than cultural flourishing. The meaning of "quality of life", in theory and practice, has been summarised in terms of economic benefits and material advantages. In other words, the aim of such policies has been focused on jobs for people, accommodation for living and environment for pleasure and entertainment (see Chapter 3). But, in almost all such concepts and debates, an important element in people's life has been ignored. It seems, the "tool" and the "target" have been misunderstood and in many cases misplaced. This means that urban regeneration has been identified as the target, while it should be used as a tool to achieve some thing much more important to complete people's needs.



Therefore, this research emphasises that urban regeneration approaches should consider all aspects of urban life, in social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. The focus on *cultural values* in this research represents a departure from much of contemporary urban studies literature which has all too often concentrated on material benefits and statistical data as standards of the quality of life. This thesis wishes to look at the problem through a cultural window which generates a normative perspective on urban life and social actions.

According to the cultural perspective of the city, in this study, there are a whole series of alternative measures of the quality of life. These emphasise such dimensions as economic opportunity for all people, and a perspective which sees “city for people” rather than “people for city” and which can provide for the immediate needs for all as the first aim, and then struggle for economic growth.

This research stresses that whilst the oil-rich days of MIS brought about some degree of economic growth and urban development, such growth did not represent a coherent economic development or a good contribution to well-being. It introduced tensions between different values systems, leading to social segregation and class conflicts among local people. Whilst there are problems about the material means of support, cultural cohesion and social unity in the city can provide an alternative basis for improving well-being, and, possibly material conditions too.

This means that we need to consider urban regeneration as an issue of continuing interest not only because of the need for more successful economic development within the city but because of the achievement of human development.

From a cultural perspective, two prominent dimensions cut across the issues and dilemmas of the future of MIS. They are:

- 1) considering culture as the basis for collective action toward social, political and economic sustainability of urban life.
- 2) The importance of cultural values as the driving force of economic regeneration.

The research emphasises that culture should be considered at the heart of both of them. The achievement of the two proposed roles for cultural values may lead to the creation of human development as well as economic welfare in the context of the city; i.e. a combination of moral values and material benefits.

Culture, from our perspective, is completely different from the idea of looking at culture as some symbols embedded in the facades of commercial buildings and housing estates, or in the form of cultural events created for international tourism and conventions as a leading factor in a city's economic development (Bassett, 1993).

In this study, culture is a way of thinking and acting based on a set of shared values and systems of meaning between some people in a society. This provides a normative context within which social action is instituted and acted out (Agnew *et al.*, 1984; Healey, 1997).

The development of human capital through an efficient dynamic interaction between socio-cultural and economic dimensions of urban life is the main target of regeneration policies in this research.

## 1.4 Aims and Objectives

As earlier pointed out, endogenous urban regeneration requires local capacity, in particular social and human resources. This suggests a real participation and involvement of local people. So, the research explores the potential for local economic regeneration, through the empowerment of local communities, encouraging local people to participate and co-operate in local economic activities. In this socio-economic movement, the driver of regeneration, from an economic point of view, is neither the public sector nor private sector, but it is "co-operative (or social) sector". That is, a kind of endogenous development based less on government and more on the contribution of people. In this model, cultural factors are accepted as important for understanding citizens and their socio-economic needs.

By listening to the people, we may integrate social development as well as local economic development through reviving cultural and moral values. This may lead to a challenge to the dominant people's beliefs and their cultural values in technology,

development, and competition for better life. It seems, it is the responsibility of planning to achieve such a vital task.

Thus, a new approach is needed to link social and economic aspects of urban life to cultural values and to give people a key role as active agency. The aims and objectives of this research can be drawn as follows.

1) To develop a new approach to urban regeneration based on a conception of the human being as situated in the world, his nature and his capability as an *active agency*, as well as clarifying both the meanings and roles of *culture* in urban life

2) To present a conceptual model as an alternative approach to urban life, based on the first aim, which

a) locates the most important elements of urban life within a cultural context, and, b) describes the relationships between these elements in a systemic way

3) To demonstrate the value of the approach through the example of the empowerment of the small business sector to show how cultural values can influence economic developments, and finally

4) To explore how socio-economic regeneration, in both moral and material aspects, can be achieved through cultural values.

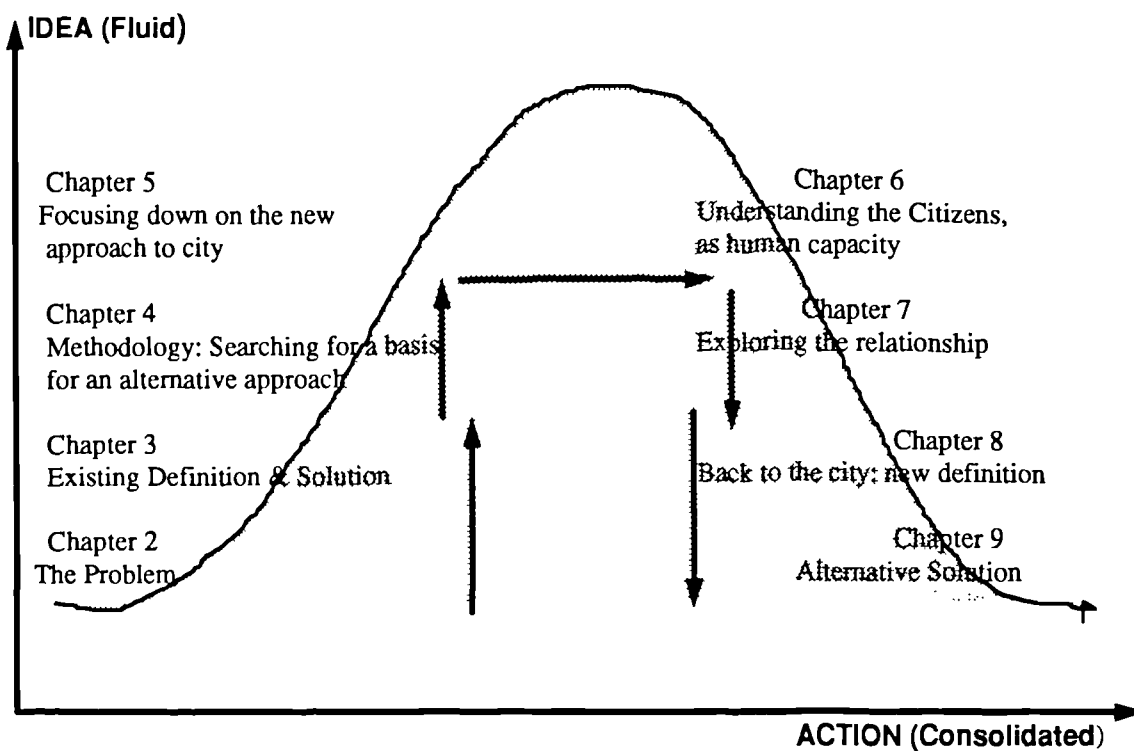
## 1.5 The Research Process and Methods

"*Methods*" of research are the actual techniques or styles used in the process of the investigation such as data collecting, data analysing and so on. *Methodology* is mainly concerned with the research epistemology. It includes discussion of how theories are generated and tested, what kind of logic is followed, what criteria they have to satisfy and so on (Blaikie, 1993). The methodology of this thesis will be explained in Chapter 4. The methods, structure and the process of the research are reviewed as follows.

The thesis, in general, contains four main parts, each comprising chapters linked to a specific theme. The research follows two dimensional areas: *Idea* (Subjective) and

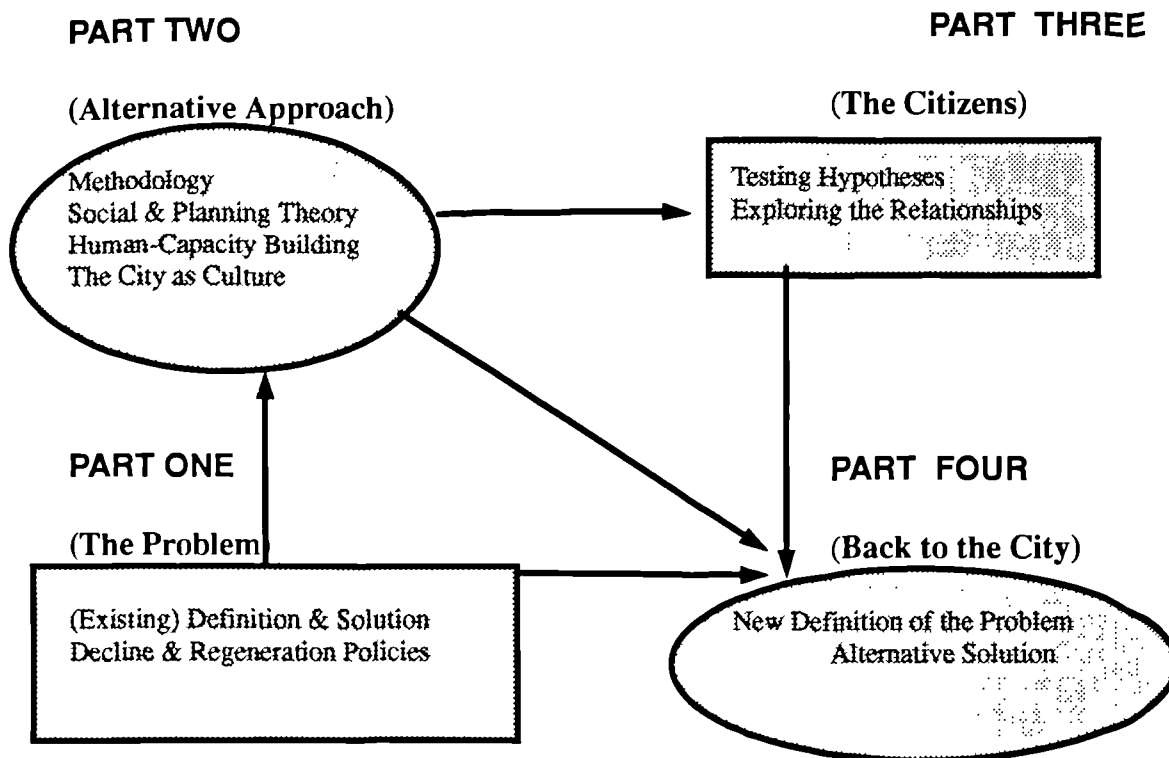
*Action* (Objective), and attempts to make a reasonable balance in these two areas. We start from an identification of a problem, review others' description and definition of the problem as well as their solutions. Then, we develop our idea and thinking to explore and understand the problem in the inter-subjective area, attempt to test and enrich our idea in a subjective-objective area, and finally in an objective area we try to redefine the initial matter and suggest a possible solution (see Figs. 1.1, 1-2).

**Fig 1.1 The Research Structure (I)**



The theme of *Part I* is the problem and the solution in contemporary theory and practice. Chapter Two describes a summary of the evolution of MIS, from the discovery of oil up to the present. This chapter, drawing on some formal documents, tries to demonstrate the existing urban problems and the phenomenon of decline in the city. Chapter Three reviews the significant dominant urban policies and initiatives during the last few decades in Western Europe and North America and Iran, in order to show the gap in the literature as well as the lack of effective policy to tackle urban problem adequately.

Fig 1.2 The Research Structure (II)



The theme of *Part II*, as the main body of the conceptual part of the research, is developing an alternative approach to social life, human needs and urban policy. Chapter 4 explains fundamental concepts which are borrowed from scholars and modified to build a conceptual framework for the research methodology, to illustrate a general world-view and basic concepts in social theory. Subsequently, this chapter concludes an alternative approach to urban regeneration policy based on human capacity. Chapter 5 develops this general concept and attempts to produce a new definition for social life in the context of city. This chapter discusses multidimensional aspects of urban life focusing on people and their cultural values as the significant elements which have been ignored in the modern urban policy.

*Part III*, as the empirical part of the research, deals with local people's attitudes and their culture. Chapter Six as the first section of the empirical part of the research explains how the survey has been designed, prepared and conducted in the field to discover people's views about these elements. General descriptive statistics of the

socio-economic characteristics of the respondents together with the questions and answers are shown at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Seven deals with the processes and explanation of data analysis. Through this chapter various statistical methods, such as *Cross-Tabulation* analysis, *Multi Dimensional Scaling*, and *Logistic Regression* analysis are used to measure the relationship between different variables derived from the survey. The SAS (Statistical Analysis System) has been employed for this data analysis.

In *Part IV*, we go back to the city of MIS, the case study area. Chapter Eight reconsiders carefully the processes of urban social, cultural and economic changes in MIS during the last century. This leads to the development of a new definition of the existing problems of MIS, through the human capacity building approach. Chapter Nine, is an attempt to link between the theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis. In theory, it intends to show the role of cultural values in increasing the social mobilisation and consequently the socio-economic development in the city. Developing the conceptual models of cultural values and human capacity, this chapter attempts to show the capability of local people in the form of community development, co-operative sector, small businesses etc., as an strategic policy approach, for socio-economic regeneration and cultural development in MIS.

Chapter Ten concludes the thesis with a summary of the findings, general discussion and also recommendations in both theory and practice.

## **1.6 The Limitations of the Research**

An important point needs to be mentioned relates to the sources of data. There is a real shortage of information and formal documents about the early years of the development of the oil industry in MIS. The research data therefore have mostly been obtained through the following main resources:

A) Some technical reports issued by the British Petroleum Company, and later by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

B) The few limited reports about MIS and the province of Khuzistan issued by the Plan and Budget Organisation of Iran, in both the national and provincial level.

C) Interviews with local people, in particular the older residents who were former oil employees and now are retired.

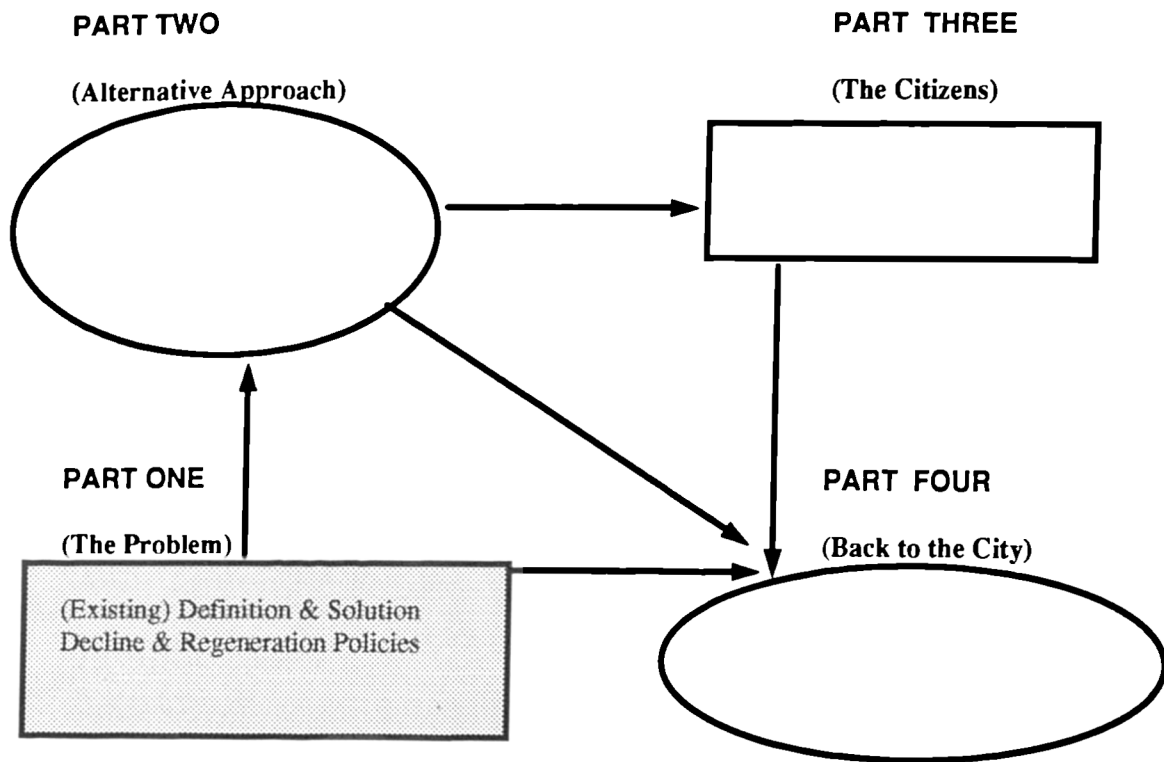
D) Personal experience of living in a neighbouring city of MIS for more than twenty years

E) Referring to the ideas and issues of a few writers who have produced some literature regarding MIS or Khuzistan

Because of the limited amount of data available, perhaps, some parts of our arguments in the thesis, need some stronger evidence to be fully proved. However, we have referred to one or some of the above sources to support our claim. Some of the author's interpretations and analysis of the facts in the history of MIS should therefore be treated, to some extent, as provisional. However, the methodological approach of this research indicates that all research findings are to an extent provisional, as "*we cannot understand the whole truth, but part of it*".

It should also be noted that this research does not produce a development plan for the city in question. Instead this is an attempt to find an appropriate way to look at the problem, to identify the significant elements which should be involved in the plan, to explore the relationships between the elements identified, and finally suggest a policy approach to urban regeneration in the proposed city.

# PART 1





# 2

## MIS: A City in Decline

### Introduction

Like most oil producer countries, petroleum acts as the principal source of Iran's revenue. For these countries high dependency on an easy income involves a long-term risk. Furthermore, all other economic and even social activities in the country are affected by such a heavy dependency upon this single resource.

The aim of this research is not to focus upon the effects of oil revenue in the macro or micro level of national economy, although it is quite relevant to the subject of this research. Instead, we shall consider the influences of the oil industry on the process of urban development and decline in the context of both economic and socio-cultural aspects of urban life. Indeed, this research will be concerned with planning what may be described as an "urban regeneration" strategy for a city in Iran with an "oil-based" economy.

This chapter is organised in four sections. In the first section, the background and history of the region and its socio-economic situation will generally be reviewed. In sections two and three the socio-economic changes in Iran, Khuzistan and Masjid-i-Soleiman (M.I.S), the case study of this research, caused by the development of the oil

industry, will be considered. Finally, the impacts of the oil exhaustion on MIS life and the existing socio-economic problems in the city will be identified.

## **2.1 Background and Context**

### **2.1.1 Khuzistan**

Khuzistan, as the heart of Iran's oil region, with the area of some 6140 sq. kilometres, is one of the largest and most important provinces of the country. Khuzistan is connected to the Persian Gulf from the South and has a long common border with Iraq in the West. The region which, today, is called Khuzistan, was a long time ago, a part of an ancient state of Ilam. According to historical evidences, Ilamian people had lived in this region from about 800 BC. They were probably the first nation who established an independent state within what became Persia or Iran (Imam M., 1977).

A huge amount of oil and natural gas resources, great resources of fresh flowing water together with very rich and fertile soil, adjacent to the Persian Gulf and accessible to the free highway of the sea, taken all together, are the obvious reasons why Khuzistan came to occupy a strategic position in the country and the Persian Gulf region as well (Fig. 2.1)

**Fig 2.1 The Geographical Location of Khuzistan**



### 2.1.2. Masjid-i-Soleiman (MIS) from an Ancient City to a Company Town

Between the middle of the Ninth and Early Seventh Century BC, an Aryan people called “Parsowa” came from the North West Zagross mountain and settled down on the Khuzistan plain. The existing MIS was one of the areas which had been selected for settlement by these semi-civilized people, whose economy was based on animal breeding, particularly raising horses. They gradually learned farming. They abandoned nomadic life and built a new settlement at the slope of the Zagross mountains. They called this settlement “Parsomash” in memory of their original land. According to the evidence remaining from that period, a high stony building with very strong columns was built over the hill, as the temple of the city. That was the original location of the present city called MIS. Some parts of this ancient building still exist and are protected as cultural heritage. Some historians also believe that Parsomash was the first Persian city. The emergence of Parsomash was probably the beginning point of urbanisation in ancient Persia (Imam, 1977).

The present MIS is located in a semi hot-dry area surrounded by a chain of mountains which contain several mineral resources. There are some plains and valleys among these hills and mountains which have been occupied by 282 oil wells.

Although MIS city has a few thousand years tradition and history, only two ancient buildings have remained from such an ancient civilisation, all other existing parts of the city have been established within this century, after the discovery of oil. Indeed, MIS had been initially “regenerated” and modernised as a new town of the twentieth century in order to provide urban facilities for oil company employees, in particular foreigners.

The new emergence of MIS, several centuries after its first generation occurred at 4.00 AM on the 26th of May 1908, when oil was struck from the area later called Nafton, which is now the centre of MIS city. Indeed, the history of MIS is marked by two historic points in the history of Iran itself. The new creation of MIS was based upon the characteristics of a *Company Town*, and also under the condition of a *Semi-Colonial City*, since its early growth was very closely linked to a British oil company and Britain commercial and political interests.

### 2.1.3 Social Background of MIS People (Bakhtiari Tribe)

The main Iranian tribes living in the Zagross mountains are Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiaris and Qashghais. The Kurds live in Kurdistan province, north-west Iran; they are ethnically Muslim (mostly Sunnis) and speaking Kurdish. In the mountains south to the Kurds live the Lurs, in Luristan province. They are Shi'i and speak an aberrant form of Persian. Next to the Lurs, the Bakhtiaris who are studied in this research, live in the central Zagross mountains, in the provinces of Luristan, Khuzistan, and Chahar-Mahal va Bakhtiari. They are also Shi'i and speak a dialect similar to that of the Lurs. The Bakhtiari are ethnically part of the Lurs, however, distinguishable from them historically and geographically. The Qashghais consist of twelve tribes as members of a strong confederation live in South Zagross mountains. They are Shi'i and speak Turkish (Holt *et al* 1970, 1977) (Fig. 2.2).

Almost all people living in the case study area are Bakhtiari. The Bakhtiaris are the largest and the most important nomadic tribe in Iran. They have still largely kept their traditional lifestyle of moving with their flocks and sheep and goats across the central Zagross mountains. (Oliver, 1997). They are a powerful confederation under the strong tribal traditions and rules. In their annual migrations they move simultaneously over five routes from their winter to their summer pasture. Their winter pasture lies on the lowlands and foothills of the lower course of the Karun river in Khuzistan, around the existing location of MIS; their summer pasture in the long alpine valley of the Upper Karun. This move along the established routes can be as long as 300 km, in a period of up to six weeks. In both places they have permanent villages. Their migrations require much organisation, accurate planning, and exact timing, and armed horsemen police the migrants and their flocks on the way. Strong kinship ties and commitment to the tribal rules and to succession to the chieftainship are the most obvious characteristics of these people. Since the beginning of the 20th century, under the Reza Shah's Dictatorship, many Bakhtiaris have been forced to settle down or are semi-sedentary with short-distance migration. Most of their villages have populations of less than 200, formed of one or more tribal camps.

**Fig 2.2 The Location of Bakhtiari Tribe in Iran**



The villages are clustered around each other on high, small plains and along the valleys, near springs and rivers, within distances of up to 5 km from each other which allows pedestrian access between different parts of the tribe. The layout of their settlements in almost all areas follows the mountain land forms (Holt *et al* 1970, 1977; Oliver, 1997).

## 2.2 The Evolution of the Oil Industry in Iran

In the early 1900s, in Khuzistan, some two-fifths of the population were settled agriculturists, with the highest proportion of villages in the northern part of the region. It was here that the most important towns were located, with Dezful (25,000) and Shushtar (20,000) serving as the centres for trade and manufacturing for the surrounding countryside.

In 1901 the Iranian government granted an oil concession to William Knox D'arcy a British investor who was looking for a profitable investment. According to this agreement a special permission to search, exploit, develop and sell natural gas and petroleum was granted to D'arcy by the Iranian government. After oil had been proved in commercial quantities, in order to develop the oil fields and work the D'arcy Concession, with the British government intervention, under a new agreement between the British Company and the Iranian government, in April 1909, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was established. That was also the formation of the British Petroleum Company (Ferrier, 1982). In 1935, according to the wishes of Iran's central government, APOC was renamed as Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). After nationalisation of the oil industry in 1953, the new oil company in the absence of foreigner partners was re-named as National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

The discovery of oil in 1908 and its subsequent extraction brought considerable social and economic changes in South West Iran and the Persian Gulf region during the first half of the 20th century. The discovery of a major oil field at Masjed-i-Soleiman (M.I.S), the case study area of this research, the arrival of the British Oil Company and the formation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) caused regional economic growth and increased the rate of in-migration rapidly. Discovering oil and access to the

new oil fields, followed by establishing transporting pipe lines and tanks, and later by the construction of refineries, resulted in a rapid growth in the number of workers employed in the industry (Table 2.2).

In the early years of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's (APOC) activities, although much of the unskilled labour was drawn from local people such as the Bakhtiari (in MIS) and Arab (in Abadan and Khoramshahr) tribes, a great number of workers were attracted from other parts of the country and abroad.

Reviewing the employment figures in Table 2.1 shows that two major events caused a considerable growth in the number of employees. First, during the First World War (1914-1918), the target was increasing oil production to the maximum level regardless of economic results. This strategy increased both production and employees rapidly.

**Table 2.1 Iranian and Foreign Employees of the AIOC in Iran, 1910-1950**

Year	Iranian	Foreign	Total
1910	1,362	344	1706
1915	2,203	1246	3449
1920	8,447	3895	12,342
1925	15,820	13,085	28,905
1930	20,095	11,151	31,246
1935	13,337	1,717	15,054
1940	21,775	2,076	23,850
1945	34,610	3,634	38,244
1950	55,934	4,405	60,339

Sources: R. W. Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, Vol. 1, *The Developing Years 1901-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) pp. 276 and 401.



Second, with the removal of the powerless Qajar (Kingdom) government and the formation of a new dictatorship under Reza Khan in 1923, a new political situation resulted in Iran. The relations of the Oil Company (OC) with the new more powerful and centralised Iranian Government were improved, and the position of the Oil Company became more stable in its relations with the British Government. (Ferrier, 1982). This new political environment together with some technical improvements in oil exploration and extraction, the improvement of the refinery (Abadan) processes, and the good outlook of world market in oil stimulated the OC authorities to expand their activities, leading to an increase in its employees till late 1920s.

Changing the chairman of the British Company in 1927, led to the establishment of a new strategy under John Cadman's chairmanship. He believed that the Company's existence was fundamentally based on its position in Iran. Therefore, in order to improve the Company's vulnerable condition, access to other oil fields around the world and co-operation with other oil companies, he decided to reduce oil activities in Iran. This caused a remarkable decrease in the number of the OC employees in Iran in the early 1930s (Ferrier, 1982).

Nevertheless, by the late 1940s, the oil industry dominated the economy of Southwest Iran, dictating conditions of employment and of wages throughout the local labour market. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) was the largest employer in Iran, employing (in 1948) more Iranian workers than the total work force of all the manufacturing establishments in the country with ten workers or more. By 1950, some 60,000 local workers were employed in the oil companies operating in the region, with a further 30,000 to 35,000 employed by local contractors. Local employees represented 92.7 percent of the total work force at the AIOC (NIOC, 1978) (Table 2.1).

The scale of population movements resulting from the arrival of the oil company in the Khuzistan and the massive demand for labour, especially during the construction phase of their activities, had influenced socio-economic conditions, people's life style and the urban system of the region. Such an urbanisation was happening in other parts throughout Iran.

In the urban context, the discovery of oil in 1908, in MIS, and the subsequent development of the oil fields accelerated the urbanisation process, reinforced the new settlement pattern, and added significant new towns into the emerging urban system of Khuzistan.

### 2.2.1 The Impact of the Oil Industry on Urbanisation in Khuzistan

Until the opening of the Karun River (the largest river of Iran), the province was weakly urbanised, and the only settlements that could be defined as towns were Dezful and Shushtar, the provincial capital. The opening of the Karun River to navigation in 1888, followed by the first discoveries of oil in 1908, brought profound socio-economic changes to Khuzistan. That influenced the traditional Islamic urban centres, and population was attracted to the new centres of economic activity that were initiated in the South. In particular, the two river ports of Khoramshahr (Mohamarah) and Ahwaz experienced rapid population growth. Khoramshahr increased from 3,000 inhabitants in 1882 to 120,000 in 1916; Ahwaz which was merely a village of 300 inhabitants in 1882, developed into a town of 4,000 people by 1916 (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2. Population of Urban Centres in Khuzistan, 1882-1956**

	1882	1890	1916	1934	1956
Abadan	--	--	--	61,000	283,601
Ahwaz	300	1,000	4,000	30,000	212,953
Dezful	20,000	25-30,000	15,000	50-60000	180,460
Khoramshahr	3,000	6,000	12,000	30,000	67,658
Shushtar	10,000	22,000	10,000	20,000	57,333
M.I.S	?	?	?	20,000	44,651

Source: Imam M. (1950) *The Geographical History of Khuzistan*, In Persian; The First National Census of Iran, (1956)

The population of the province grew rapidly as a result of strong immigration; the total population increased from an estimated 180,000 in the 1880s to 410,000 in

the early 1920s, 543,000 in 1943 and 1,432,000 at the First National Census of Iran in 1956 (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3. Khuzistan: Migrants and Non-Migrants Population, November 1956**

City	Population	Non migrants	Migrants	Percent
Abadan	283,601	161,002	119,287	42
Ahwaz	212,953	150,901	61,202	29
Dezful	180,460	143,514	36,638	20
Khoramshahr	67,658	44,929	22,055	32
M.I.S	44,651	29,916	14,735	33
Shushtar	57,333	54,765	2,543	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>846656</b>	<b>585027</b>	<b>256460</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: The first National Census of Iran, 1956

In the early years, a major source of in-migration was from rural areas and adjacent provinces where depression of trade and insecurity of property encouraged people to emigrate. The 1956 census showed that about 30 percent of the population of the major cities of Khuzistan had been born outside the census district in which they were enumerated. Of the migrant groups (256460), some two-thirds had been born in other provinces (see Table 2.3).

Dezful and Shushtar, on the other hand, declined in importance and population, and many of their tradesmen and merchants emigrated to the south, especially to Ahwaz. The population of Dezful, for example, estimated at 20,000 in 1882, had declined to 15,000 by 1916; a similar trend could be seen at Shushtar. Overall, the principal trends in the demographic development of the province during the first half of the 20th century were the increase in the number of sedentarized as opposed to tribal and village people, rapid urbanisation, and the emergence of towns with large populations in the southern parts of the province.

### 2.2.2 The Positive and Negative Impacts

The scale of both direct and indirect employment generated by the oil industry, especially during its construction phases, was considerable, attracting labour from all parts of the country while, in addition, there was an influx of foreign workers from states on the periphery of the region. The impact of the oil industry and its associated population movements was profound and brought about a major restructuring of the urban systems of Khuzistan. Traditional Islamic cities, such as Dezful and Shushtar were quickly eclipsed by new western-style creations, such as Abadan and MIS. Thus, it can be concluded that oil not only caused the restructuring of the urban system in Khuzistan but it played a leading role in destroying traditional urban forms and establishing the dominance of Western urban development models in this important region.

Overall, to clarify the main points of urban development based on a single product economy, both the "positive" and "negative" effects of the oil industry on Khuzistan are outlined as follows. This helps to clarify the main periods of growth.

#### The Positive Effects

The positive effects of the development of the Oil Industry in the area are mostly concentrated on material benefits, economic growth and urban infrastructure.

- *Job Creation, Rising Income and Economic Growth*

During the period of OC activities, a considerable number of factories were established, a wide range of road network and transportation facilities were built and developed. These huge construction activities completely changed the economic character of Khuzistan, in comparison with the past. Several electric plants, a gas refinery, petrochemical industries, a sulphur production factory and the most important refinery in the world, at Abadan, which employed a large number of people from many parts of the country, all together increased regional income, a lot of jobs were created and there was a high rate of growth in employment, i.e.; urban development and the growth of the urban population. In general, the oil industry brought rapid economic growth in the region as well as some social changes.

- *The establishment of new towns with modern urban facilities*

The oil industry created some new towns, such as Abadan, Haft-Gel, Agha-Jari and Naft-e Safid. Some existing cities such as M.I.S, Ahwaz, and Khorramshahr were developed rapidly. Such towns and cities established and/or developed merely as a response to the oil industry and its associated activities.

- *Providing educational and training establishments at the local and regional scale.*

After about ninety years of the OC's activities in Khuzistan, there are considerable resources of professional experiences and technical capability that could be employed as human resources to develop different economic sectors, particularly in industry.

To achieve its aims, the OC founded a great number of special schools to teach employees essential learning and techniques via training course. Such employees, then, applied these instructions into practice for about thirty years of professional experience, as a consequence every worker was skilled and became expert in his job. Today, there are a great number of unemployed and retired skilled people in the Khuzistan and especially in MIS who could be employed in similar other industrial sections.

- *Building an adequate Transportation System at the Regional and Local level*

During the discovery and exploitation of oil, to provide a sufficient access to oil resources, storage locations, exportation and other oil industry activities many roads and a transportation network in urban and regional level, and also an airport in MIS, have been established.

### **The Negative Effects**

As an essential part of a modern company in the capitalist world, in order to maximise profits, the Oil Company employed the most bureaucratic administrative system and a wide range of modern factories together with favourable facilities. Further, to attract skilled people, the Oil Company made many efforts to provide

sufficient facilities for its employees, such as: establishing a great number of schools and other educational institutions, construction of wide range of transportation system, accommodating of modern hospitals and so on. Such considerable efficiency and suitable conditions, brought a dualism between traditional activities and the world of the oil industry, in other words a serious and unfair competition, between modern and tradition, happened where the winner could be easily predicted.

- *Social Exclusion and Segregation*

As the Oil Company's employees gained economic benefits and some social welfare, the development of the traditional activities such as animal breeding and handicrafts was dramatically undermined. The wide difference in living conditions brought many social problems. For example, the inferiority complex among people who were not employed by the Oil Company, in contrast with the prestige of working in the industry, was one of the most negative social effects of the oil industry's activities (Afghah, 1991).

Dividing society into two main classes, as oil employee and non-oil employee, and even the classification of oil employees (occupational ranking) into the three groups of workers, senior officers, and managers, with particular conditions and facilities for each level, caused serious social segregation in the society.

Probably the most striking feature was the strict segregation of the inhabitants by ethnicity and occupational status, a policy that gave rise to sharp breaks between adjacent areas containing population groups of markedly different status. Such a policy caused an obvious social exclusion in the city leading to social decline. In this way, the strictly hierarchical occupational structure of the company was closely reflected in the spatial patterning of the city's residential areas. Significantly, the influences of the company's policies on the spatial patterning of the city's population remained after the company was nationalised and the number of foreign employees declined dramatically.

- *Affecting Local Economic Activities*

Before the discovery of oil and its rapid development in Khuzistan, there was an economic equilibrium and a reasonable relationship among three economic sectors of

industry, agriculture and services, although such an equilibrium was at a low level of investment. Because of geographical situation and suitable climate conditions, agriculture and animal husbandry were the dominant activities, as in most developing countries, in that historic period. In addition to agricultural activities, handicrafts and trade via the Persian Gulf were other important businesses of local people.

The discovery of oil and its rapid expansion, in most parts of Khuzistan, destroyed these activities and their employees were attracted by the oil company with more convenient conditions than they had before. Francois Perroux (1988) in this respect, pointed out that Khuzistan's oil caused not only the surroundings of its regions to be undeveloped, but also the old current system to be involved in decline and stagnation. He also emphasised that Abadan's oil centre as a development pole, transferred the development waves to outside of country, and profited other developed countries.

- *Overshadowing the Non-Oil Sectors*

The great deal of investment in oil and its value added, led to an important role for oil industries in the region and dramatically influenced the rest of the productive units. In other words, the oil company became a central industry and other activities were formed upon its existence and conditions. i.e., many of the industries and services were seriously dependent to the oil industry. This economic structure resulted in some basic problems in most oil cities, in particular MIS, when oil resources, after a long period exploitation, were exhausted.

- *Causing a wide range of Migration and social problems*

Two types of work-force migrations took place in Khuzistan, after the discovery of oil: a) Migration from internal and neighbouring cities or rural areas of Khuzistan to the oil towns

b) Migration from abroad and some other provinces and regions to Khuzistan

Such broad migration changed the composition of the population in some cities of Khuzistan and therefore caused a wide transformation in social structure and

people's life style, particularly in urban regions. This situation, on the other hand, caused many new social problems in the region most of which were as the result of new dominant Western culture.

- *Domination of wage earner culture among local people*

As a result of the above mentioned points, the high quality of the Oil Company's conditions encouraged people to leave their own jobs and join themselves to the Oil Company (OC). These circumstances and its continuation over a long time, caused a *wage-earner* culture to develop among young people, as today, it is realised that, most people prefer to be employed by governmental sectors, rather than becoming involved in the private sector or to be self employed.

## 2.3 MIS and the Oil Industry

### 2.3.1 Oil and The New Emergence of MIS

MIS, as the first company town of Iran, was re-established more than 80 years ago. The economic and social conditions of MIS and Iran were to be changed after the great discovery of oil. The regenerators of the city were not merely the *Bakhtiari* people came down from the Zagross mountains, but also the Western civilians who had come from developed countries looking for the "Black-Gold" as a valuable material needed for rapid industrialisation. They had found out, from historical investigation, that long time ago, the Persian people had used a natural black material to keep their fires alight at all times.

From the beginning of exploring and drilling activities by the British Petroleum Company which led to the extraction of oil in the MIS area, the demand for labour rapidly increased. Many jobs were created in extraction, maintenance and guarding. The Bakhtiaris, who lived around the area, were the first people to be invited to work for the young and fast growing oil industry. As noted, the Bakhtiaris are nomadic and semi-nomadic people who move across the Zagross mountains looking for convenient pasture. They moved from mountain to the company town which was the centre of oil production. The nomadic shepherds and farmers left their lands and flocks to work in the oil company and settled down in a permanent place in the city.



After a short time, many Bakhtiaris were employed by the OC. The formation of the Bakhtiari oil company, as an economic political action made by British company, brought about, on the one hand, the support of the Khans (Bakhtiaris' leaders) and many Bakhtiari whom were employed as the guardians of the property and equipment of the company; and more importantly, on the other hand, the Bakhtiaris felt that they shared the oil industry, its development and its profits with others. Such a mutual feeling led to further Bakhtiari people's support and a good environment for the expansion of the OC activities. Following the increase in oil extraction and the subsequent development of the oil industry, many new jobs were created. Consequently, a large number of immigrants from other parts of the region, mostly Bakhtiari, came to the area and MIS developed rapidly. In fact, the new emergence of MIS occurred in the absence of animal breeding and farming activities. Instead, it was based on oil extraction and factory working. At MIS, the centre of oil production, a new European-style town was built containing company stores and workshops, new housing areas, a company-built Bazaar (marketplace) , and a hospital. Electric power supply was secured by a new power station at Tembi.

Some important points in this concern should be considered. First at the time of discovering oil, a large number of indigenous people (Bakhtiaris), with tribal socio-cultural characteristics and a self-sufficient economy based on animal breeding and basic agricultural activities, had lived around MIS. Second, MIS has had a rich civilised urban life in ancient Iran, more than 25 centuries ago; but at the time of discovering oil there were only few buildings and a few hundred inhabitants living in the area (see Fig 2.3). Third, the unplanned rapid growth of MIS occurred when indigenous (Bakhtiaris) and immigrant people came to the city for jobs and accommodation. That was also the main reason for changing the function of MIS from a company town to a large urban settlement. A long period of working with foreigners and living with immigrants from different parts of the country of course, has had great impacts on the indigenous people and their lifestyle.

### 2.3.2 The Physical Development of MIS

The European staff, most British, employed by the Oil Company arrived in MIS generally on three-year contracts for doing a job for which they had been previously prepared. They had to live in a hot-dry area completely different from their own living environment (Ferrier, 1982). It was therefore necessary to establish adequate urban facilities and infrastructure in the area in response to both the needs of industrial development and the employee's life.

Therefore, at an early date, the Oil Company objective concentrated on to lay out housing areas for the company's expatriate staff. In appearance such areas resembled a modern European housing estate and garden city, with villas and wide roads planted with trees.

Establishing the first electric generator and pipe line network for drinking water in 1914, setting up a large modern hospital including adequate modern equipment and highly qualified staff in the same year, followed by establishing several shops and stores, more than 10 guest houses, many leisure and sport centres were parts of the modern facilities in the city. For a long time due to this provision of social services and urban infrastructure, MIS was the most well-equipped and modernised city in the region and probably one of the best in the country. Such urban facilities and infrastructure in MIS together with the availability of jobs were the main reasons for its attractiveness and in consequence the high rate of immigration from other parts of the country to the city.

The high rate of oil production during the period of the First World War led to the employment of great number of indigenous and foreign employees. Also, the provision of urban infrastructure in MIS show that a complete modern company town had been established by the end of 1930. Beginning in 1935, the company built five housing estates for wage-earning personnel, designed by Western architects. (Ferrier, 1982; Sa'edy, K. 1995).

Due to the increasing population, the demands for urban facilities and public services increased in the city. A few small projects such as an elementary school, stores and other facilities started to be established after the new agreement of 1933 between

the Iranian Government and the Oil Company. Then some public agencies were established in the city. In 1935, MIS was given the title of a formal city in the National Geographic Divisions (PBO, 1976). All these together rapidly improved the picture of MIS as a “good place for living”, and attracted many people to come to the city (Figures 2.3 (A), 2.3 (B)). It should be noted that the physical shape of the city and location of the buildings followed two main criteria. The first was the topography of the area, and the second was accessibility to the oil wells (particularly for “workers” housing sites).

Fig 2.3A The Historical Growth of MIS 1908 - 1995

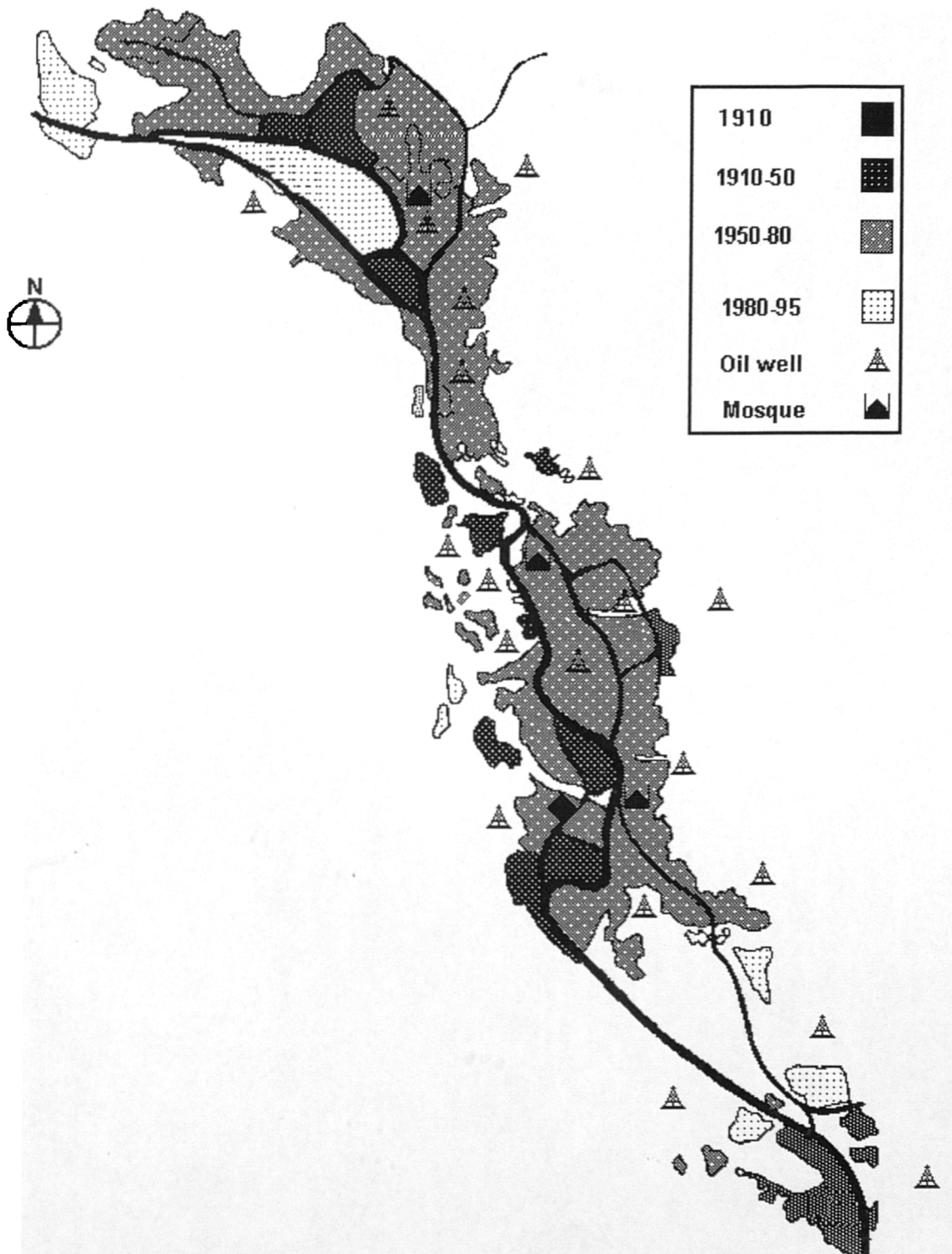
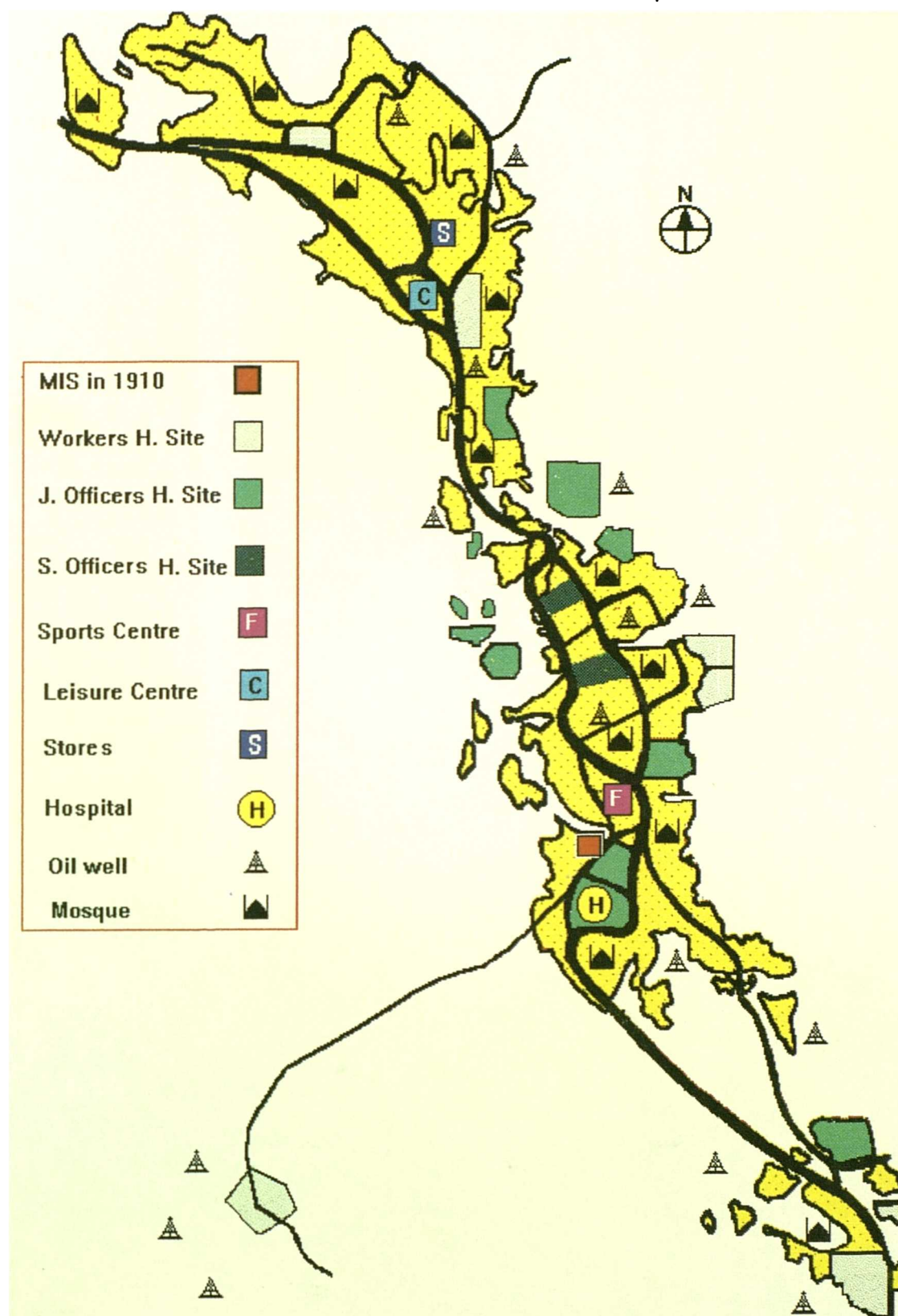


Fig 2.3B The Site Plan of MIS

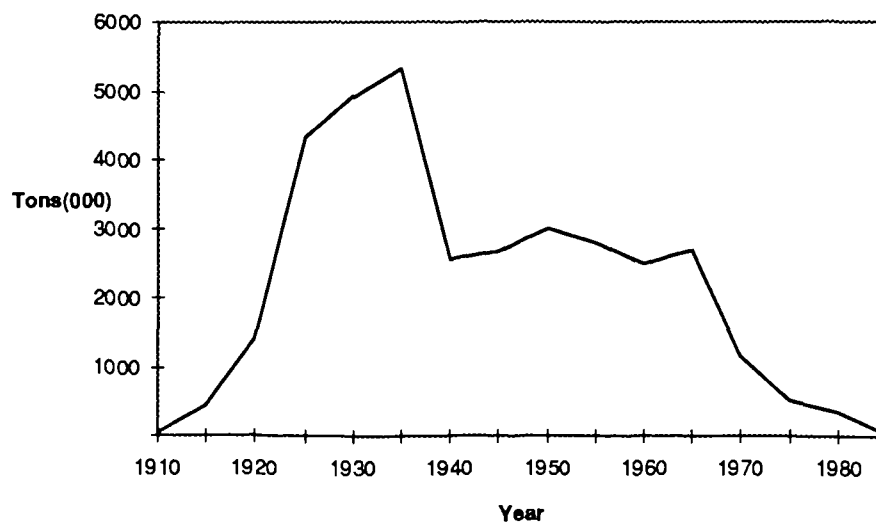


### 2.3.3 Oil Production

The strategy of the Oil Company in its early developing years was concentrated on maximum possible oil production, transportation, refining and retail marketing. This strategy was applied even during the First World War, and during the decades later (Ferrier, 1982).

The British military occupation of southern Iran in 1941 and the wartime demand for petroleum products to supply Allied forces in the Middle East and Far East initiated a new period of expansion in oil production, which could only be achieved by the development of the new fields discovered before the war. Nevertheless, MIS remained the administrative headquarters of the oil fields. With its great workshops and stores, laboratories and research institutions, offices, clubs, hospital, and residential quarters, where a large part of the Oil Company's 6,000 employees were accommodated, it remained the most complete and developed of the company's settlements outside Abadan (Ibid.).

In 1912, the export of oil started after completion of the construction of MIS's pipe-line. The amount of oil extraction, in the starting year, was 43,000 tons. That increased rapidly to one million tons per a year by the end of the first world war, in 1918. By 1925 the annual oil extraction from the MIS fields had grown to 4.3 million tons in a year. This amount increased to 5.3 million tons in 1934. In fact, the highest rate of extraction from MIS fields occurred in 1934 at a rate of 27000 barrel a day (Fig. 2.4).

**Fig 2.4 Oil Production in MIS 1912 - 1979**

Source: Ferrier (1982); NIOC Annual Report (1987)

MIS was the only source of natural oil in the region, until 1928. In that year the huge oil field of Haft-Gel was discovered and immediately oil extraction started from there. However, the extraction rate from MIS not only was not reduced by the new field, but it increasingly expanded.

After 1934, because of oil production from other oil fields, the amount of oil extraction from MIS fields dramatically decreased to less than 3 million tons in a year. Due to the *Nationalisation of the Oil Industry* movement in Iran, between 1952 and 1953, oil production sharply declined (see Chapter 8). After that, until 1966, the oil extraction rate again increased, becoming relatively stable at about 20 million barrels, approximately 3 million tons, in a year.

Too much uncontrolled oil extraction in a short period, caused low pressure in the oil wells. Thus, in 1966, it was realised that oil extraction from MIS fields was no longer easy and economic. It therefore dramatically declined to 100,000 barrel a year, a level that had once been attained in one day. This meant that more than 98 per cent of the natural oil resources had been extracted during the last 70 years without any plan or programme for the future of the city. In other words, oil production, the main

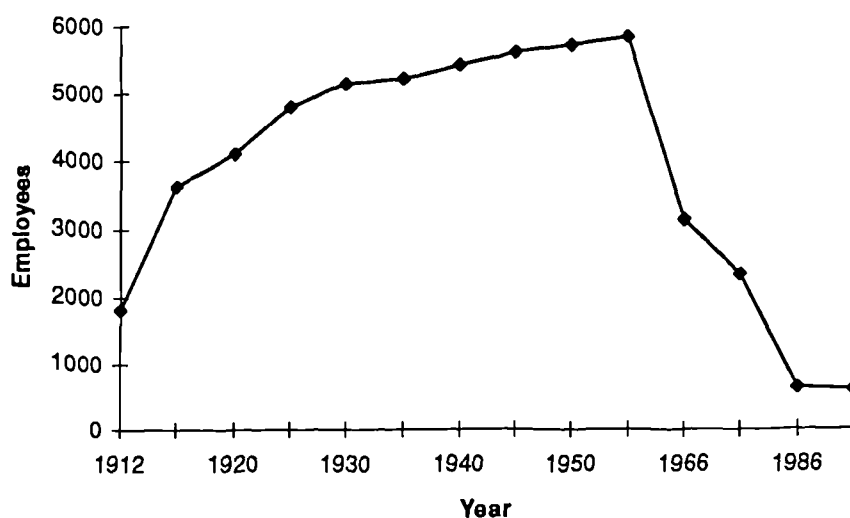
reason for city life, nearly stopped. In consequence, most activities in the city, from being on an expanding projection trajectory changed to the reverse.

Considering Figure 2.3, and comparing this with the following figures of employment and population changes, helps to clarify the relationship between oil production as a cause of urban development, and job creation and immigration as effects. It should be emphasised that there has been a lack of information in most area of this study, because of the era, and the limitations of the national census which was not started until 1956. The main sources of demographic and economic figures are the reports and public accounts of both the British Petroleum Company (BP) and also the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) which are formal documents and quite reliable (see Chapter 1).

#### 2.3.4 Employment

As already noted, MIS was re-established as a company town in relation with oil production. Reviewing changes in its population shows that people first came to the city to find a job as well as higher income. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), the only company in the area, produced a lot of jobs in its fields in the city. According to the existing data, in 1956, there were 9310 employees in the city, 5850 of them were employed by oil company, i.e. more than 63% (Fig. 2.5).

Fig 2.5 The Oil Company Employees in MIS 1912 - 1991



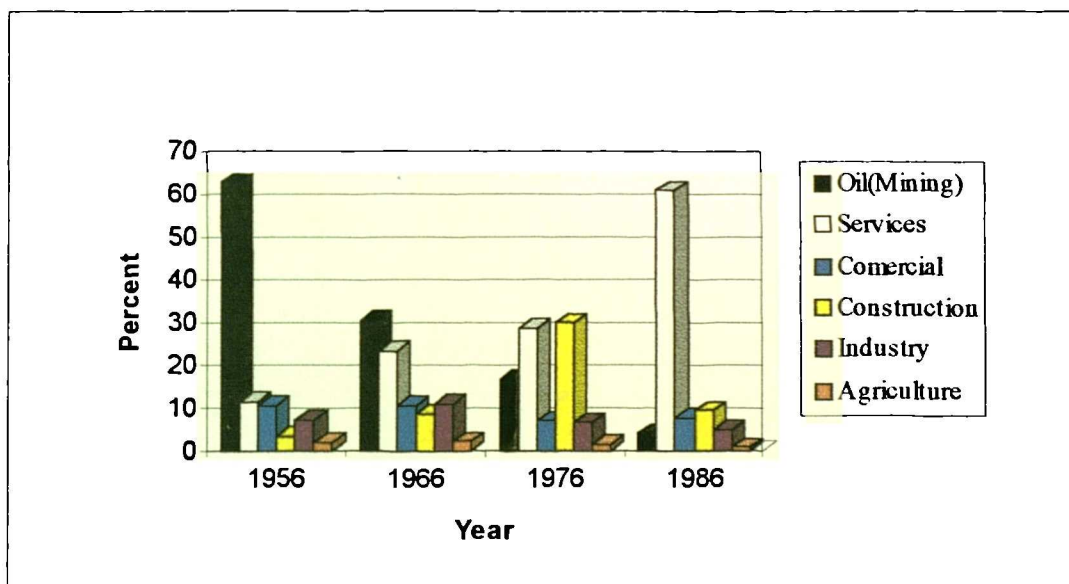
Source: AIOC and NIOC annual Reports (1987) & National Census 1956 - 1991



In 1956 only 9698 workers were involved in the Mining sector in the whole country; about 60 per cent of those were in MIS. This means that, at the time, on the one hand MIS was one of the most significant and attractive cities in Iran, and on the other hand the economy of MIS was heavily dependent upon oil production and oil industry activities.

After 1950s the Service sector began to develop in the city, while the oil sector was beginning to decline. In 1956, 11.4% of employees worked in Service sector, while this rate was about half of the same figure in national level. In the same year, 10.3% of employees were involved in the Commercial Sector which was low, in comparison with 14.4% for the national level. It shows that there was a variety of employment in the city, but not comparable with oil sector. The employment rate for the Agriculture Sector was very low, 1.8 percent, compared with 12 per cent at the national level. Only 6.9 percent were employed in the Industrial Sector, while this figure was 26 percent in the country. Indeed, commercial activity was the only important sector after oil industry in the economic situation of MIS (Fig 2.6).

**Fig 2.6 Employment by Sector in MIS 1956 - 1986**



Source: Iran's National Census 1986

Employment figures for 1966 show a decrease in the Mining Sector (oil) and a remarkable increase in the Service and Construction sectors in MIS. These figures were compatible with the growth rate of the city's population. Between 1956 and 1966, many large (and major) military projects had been planned to be established. Thus, a huge scale of construction activity started during this period. Consequently, more than 4000 workers were employed by the Construction sector, about 40 percent of all employees in the city. Meanwhile, the growth of the Service Sector and the decline in the oil industry still continued. Employment in the Industrial Sector also decreased. It is important to note that the average rate of employment growth in MIS, during 1966-1976 was about 3.1 percent while the population growth rate was only 1.8 percent. (see next section).

In 1976, about 61 percent of employees were involved in the Service sector while the contribution of the Mining sector (oil industry) was less than 4 percent. In other words after 20 years the proportion of employment in the oil industry dropped from 63 percent in 1956 to less than 17 per cent in 1976, and only 3.9 percent in 1986 (Planning & Budget Organisation, 1991).

Between 1956 and 1966 the annual rate of population growth was 3.7 percent while the growth rate of employment was about 0.9 percent. Two points might be considered in this relation. First, this figure shows the high potential and attractiveness of the city in this period. Second, there was a delay between people's perceptions and their actions. This means that the increase in population between 1956 and 1966, in fact, was people's response to economic growth and job creation in MIS, during the previous decade.

The Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the Eight years Imposed War with Iraq, during 1980-88, were the two major events that dramatically affected the picture of urban life in MIS. Investigation of these two important occurrences in detail and exploring their impacts on MIS situation is not in the scope of this research. Only brief influences of these events will be reviewed in the later parts of the research (see Chapter 8).

However, from an economic point of view, because of MIS's geographical situation, during the war period, many refugees came to MIS from other parts of the region. Like most other cities of the country, in MIS a remarkable number of jobs in military and its dependent services were created. At the same time various informal jobs like peddlers and multiform (informal) distribution activities appeared in the city.

The number of employees in the Public Sector increased from 3942 in 1976 to 9865 in 1986. During these years the rate of oil extraction from MIS fields was very low, even zero in some periods. Consequently the activity of the oil industry and also the number of employees in this sector declined, i.e. the amount of employment reduced from 6.78 percent in 1976 to 3.9 percent in 1986.

Due to the reduction in the budget of the Construction sector, the start of new projects was postponed and most old projects were either left uncompleted or continued very slowly. Thus, in that period, the percentage employed in the Construction sector also decreased from 29.7 to 9.1 percent, while the population of MIS increased from 77100 in 1976 to 104800 in 1986 (Fig. 2.7). During the period from 1976 to 1986 the population growth rate was about 3.1 percent while the employment growth rate decreased from 3.0 percent in 1976 to 1.58 percent in 1986. That meant that the rate of unemployment has dramatically increased, yet people still came to the city because of the war.

### **2.3.5 Demographic Changes**

There is no strong evidence or formal data to show how the MIS population changed after oil was discovered in 1908, until 1956. According to historians' reports and the situation of MIS as the seasonal exchange and shopping centre for Bakhtiari tribes, in the early of 20th century there were an estimated 300 inhabitants in MIS.

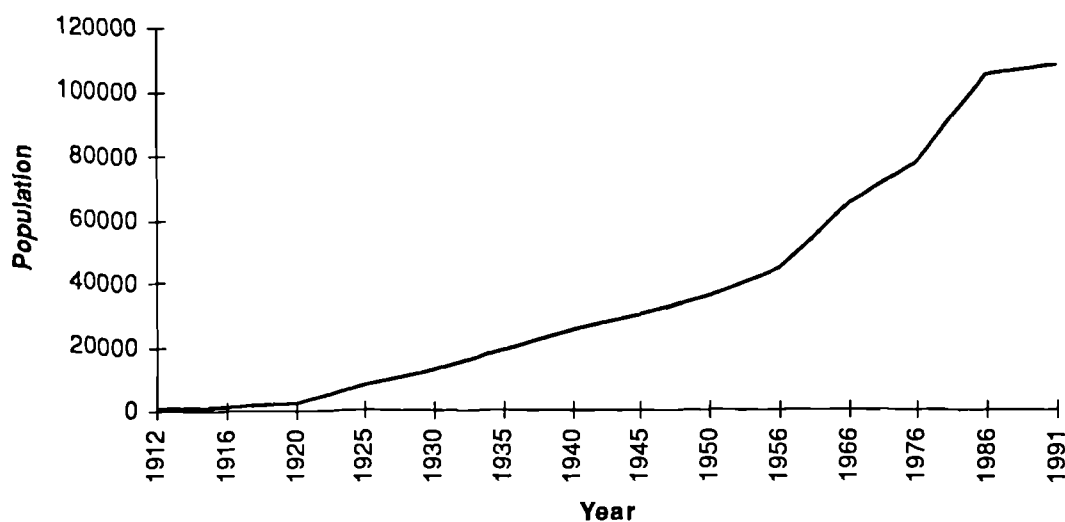
After the discovery of oil, immigration to MIS had immediately started, even before construction of adequate roads and transportation facilities between MIS and other parts of the region and rural areas. The development of the oil industry led to more people being employed. This meant that new people were attracted to the area. Increasing the number of inhabitants inevitably increased demands and created new

jobs, particularly in the Service sector. In other words, new jobs were created in the city and consequently new people again were attracted to MIS. That was a positive loop until the beginning of decline in the oil production rate from the MIS fields.

Apart from the oil industry, many immigrants were first involved in the trade and retail sector as a response to local people's demands. Most of them, later, were employed by the Oil Company. Then new immigrants came to the city and filled the vacancies, and the population of the city rapidly increased. The population of the city between 1912 and 1956 has been estimated on the basis of the number of employees of the oil company in every year.

According to the first national census in 1956, the population of MIS was 44651. From 1956 to 1966 this figure had increased to 64488 with a 3.7 percent growth rate. Between 1966 and 1976 the population increased with a 1.8 percent growth rate, in 1986 population increased to 104,787 with 3.1 percent growth for the period, and in 1991 population was 107,637 (Fig 2.7). Thus the pattern of growth of the population in no way reflected the rapid decline in oil production and oil employment. The comparison of the national population growth rate and that of MIS explains this phenomenon further.

**Fig 2.7 MIS Population 1912 - 1991**

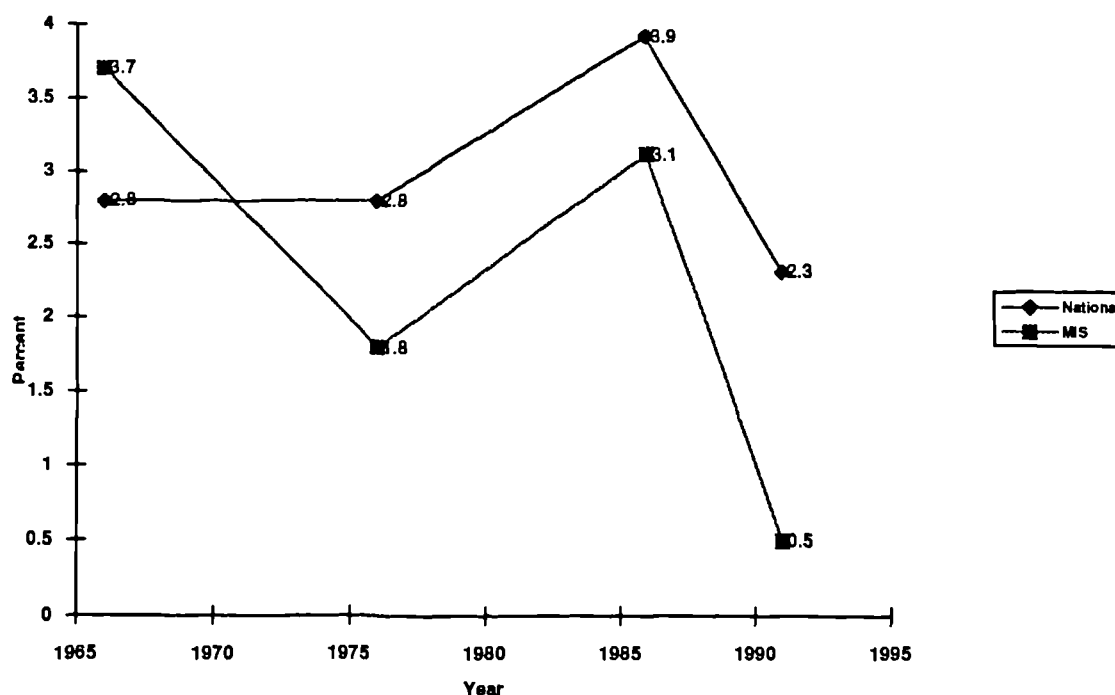


Source: Iranian National Census; AIOC annual reports

Between 1956 and 1966, the population of MIS increased with an annual growth rate of 3.7 percent. That was a good sign of the city's attractiveness which stimulated others to migrate to the city during that period. On the other hand, it should be noted that at the same period, the number of employees in oil extraction had declined to half, while the unemployment rate had also dropped to one third of the previous figure. As explained, a consideration of the rate of population change during 1966 - 1976 shows that there has been a few years delay between the changes in economic circumstances and people's perception and their response to these changes.

In fact, in the early years of the exhaustion of the oil resources and the decrease in the number of the OC employees, some people decided to leave the city. The sign of urban decline appeared in the picture of the city few years later. The population growth rate between 1966 and 1976 was about 1.8 percent while this figure was more than 2.8 percent in the national level (Fig 2.8).

**Fig 2.8 The Growth Rate of Population, MIS and National 1956-1991**



Source: National Census 1966-1996

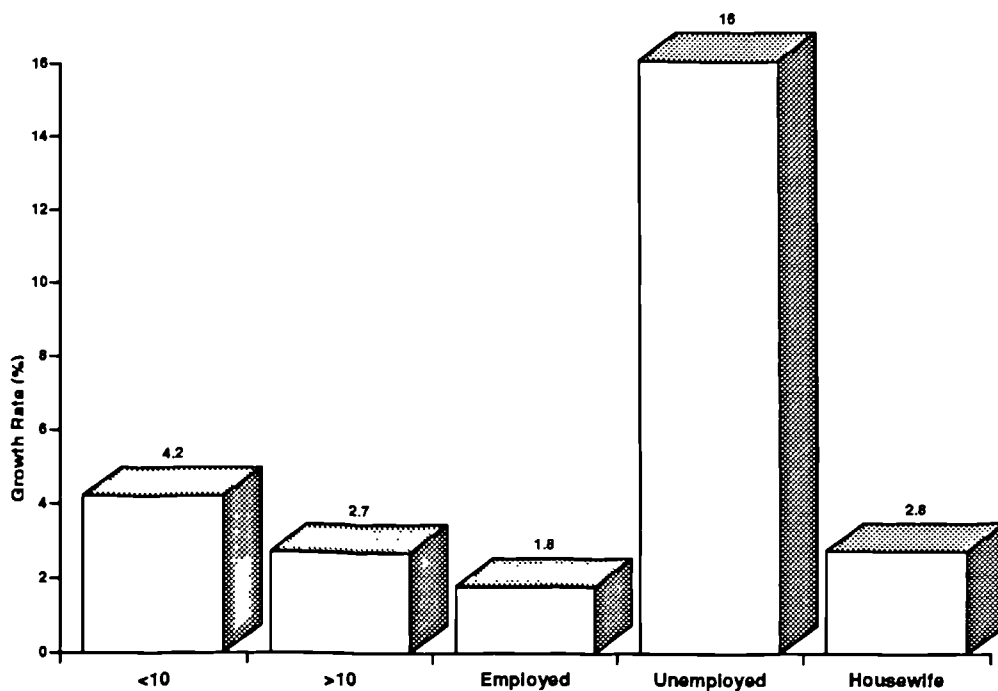
Following the exhaustion of the oil resources in MIS, the headquarters of the Oil Company was transferred from MIS to Ahwaz (the centre of Khuzistan).

Consequently, a great number of oil employees were either dismissed from their jobs or transferred to Ahwaz (or Abadan). This means that some out-migration started, but it was less than the continuing growth of population which mainly was the result of immigration from rural areas. Overall, in the period of 1966-1976 the growth rate of the population slowed down; i.e., it dropped from 3.7 percent to 1.8 percent.

However, two important events reversed the change in the population growth of MIS. The first was the event of the Islamic revolution in 1979-80. During the early years, due to significant changes in some rules and regulations, most OC restrictions and controls over land and property developments were removed. Subsequently, many people from rural areas moved to MIS, for the better life that they had wished for many years. The start of the war between Iran and Iraq, in 1980, as the second significant factor, caused thousands of refugees to come to the city, temporarily changing the face of MIS. Many jobs were created in the Military and Service sectors and the population of the city increased as a consequence. The data derived from the Fourth National Census in 1986 shows a 3.1 percent growth in the population of MIS. When most war-refugees had returned to their home-cities, this figure dropped to 0.5 percent in 1991, while at the national level this figure was 2.3 percent.

A considering of the demographic characteristics of the urban population shows that between 1976 and 1986 the growth rate of the population younger than 10 was much more than the growth rate of the population older than 10 (Fig 2.9).

This figure also shows that, during the period of 1976-1986, the growth of employment was very slow (1.8%) while at the same time unemployment rapidly grew (16%). Overall, in this period, the population of MIS rapidly increased, because of the War and also immigration from rural areas. While some jobs were created in the city, in particular in the military sector, there were not sufficient jobs for residents. Thus, unemployment appeared to be the most important problem of the city.

**Fig 2.9 The Growth Rate of Population of MIS 1976 - 1986**

Source: National Census, 1986

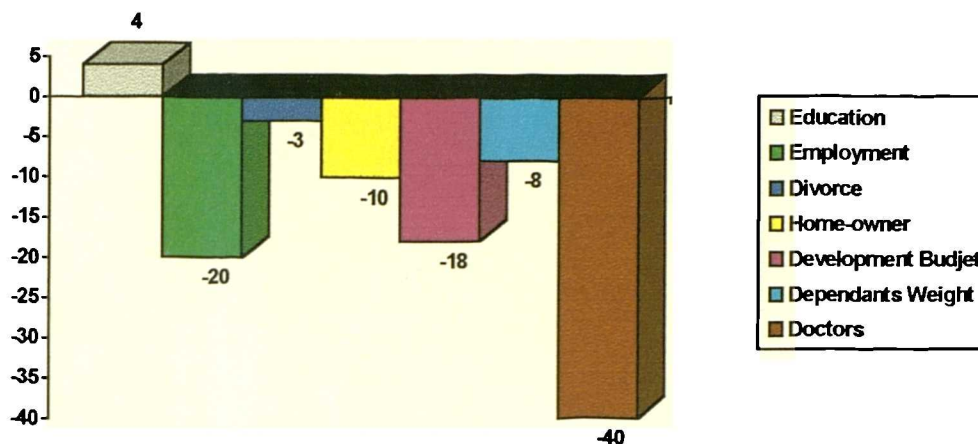
## 2.4 Oil Exhaustion and Urban Decline in MIS

Most of Khuzistan's cities were born or developed at the time of oil discovery. Therefore, the main economic activity in these area depended upon the oil industry. Although 30 years ago, MIS was one of the most urbanised and attractive cities of Iran, a recent nation-wide comparative study of urban indicators shows that MIS is now, one of the most marginalised cities in the country.

Through a comparative study, based on a measurement of 27 indicators, the Plan and Budget Organisation of Iran has ranked all urban settlements in the country (PBO, 1994). The final report shows the standard deviation of each variable from the national average for every city. Accordingly, MIS has in education (4% more than national average) and the ratio of divorces to marriages (about 3% less than national average) high ranks in relation to other cities. But, at the same time, the unemployment rate is about 19 percent higher than the national average, and variables less than the national

average including home-owners 11 percent, development budget per capita about 18 percent, dependence weight about 8 percent and the ratio of doctors to population is about 40 percent less than national average (Fig 2.10).

**Fig 2.10 Standard Deviation of MIS Urban Indicators from National Average**



Education—Percentage of population with more than 4 years schooling

Diverce—the number of divorces in 100 marriage

Level 0=indicator for national average

Dependence Weight=the number of people in a family who have income per the size of the family

Source: PBO, (1994), Urban Indicators in Iran

In general, in the present MIS, most mentioned positive impacts of oil industry development have declined. The city economy which has been mostly dependant on the oil industry, has stopped and begun to decline. Because the amount of investment in the oil sector has dramatically declined, and there has not been an adequate alternative sector to preserve the city.

At the present time, not only is the development of oil industry in MIS unrealisable, but also the continuation of the existing activities is not guaranteed any more. According to several economic theories and reports the decline of the oil industry in MIS has begun since 30 years ago. Since late 1960s, as noted, the OC has transferred its skilled personnel to other oil centres and have made the unskilled



workers redundant because their jobs were not necessary and the OC could no longer afford to pay them. This led to a big shortage in budget and skilled personnel to maintain urban facilities such as roads and transportation system; and to continue social services specifically in medical centres. Thus, after a short time, urban infrastructure started to decline; the city hospital remained as a building of bricks and stone without skilled medical staff and equipment (Local Authority of MIS, 1994).

At the same time many private firms which were indirectly dependant upon the OC, inevitably have closed down or have transferred to other areas. This, in a similar way, has decreased the gross investment and also the job opportunities in the city. Nevertheless, in recent years, the population of the city has increased continuously, although less than the national average growth rate. Because, on the one hand, undesirable conditions in the rural areas has led to the increasing immigration to the city, and on the other hand, residents ties to their home city has resulted the decreasing migration from the city. Reduction in investment in the city economy and the growth of population have caused a dramatic decline in urban income per capita. Social exclusion and deprivation, in turn, has coloured the picture of the city. This situation has resulted in further social and economic problems for the city.

Overall, almost all the economic basis of the city and the initial purpose of its establishment had collapsed, But, nevertheless MIS has remained as a big city. The following points indicate the reasons:

1. The rapid growth of the city population was one of the main factors in the economic condition of the city development. After the Islamic revolution, the removal of the OC control over land led to increasing immigration; many people from rural areas rushed to the city. This immigration continued during the early years of the war, while more than 100,000 refugees came to the city and many temporarily jobs were provided for indigenous people. After the war most these people went back to their home cities. Although the growth rate of population decreased, the increase in population was never stopped.

2. The existence of education centres in the city for both children and adults (technical training course), founded by OC, was one of the most important factors in

social development and improving the capability of MIS's residents. Now, people with a high degree of qualification and especial high technical skill could be the main reasons for the city's survival.

3. Identifying MIS as a formal "Town" in 1925 and establishing a few governmental agencies in the city improved its status and sustained it as an urban settlement. Upgrading MIS as a "City" in 1988 strengthened its position again. That new position led to various new public offices in the service, military and economic sectors. Some jobs have been created and to some extent the economic situation improved, but not sufficiently.

4. Relative social solidarity and integration in the society together with people's local ties could be the most significant reasons for the city's survival in recent years. Shared cultural backgrounds as well as the same basic religious values have been quite strong factors to keep people close to each other and to stay in their own city. They love their city and would not like to leave the city even under existing economic problems (see Chapter 6).

## Conclusion

MIS has come a long way in the path of reformation from an isolated housing site for oil company employees to a city with great diversity and modern features like other cities in the country.

Overall, in MIS, after some fifty years of oil exploitation, oil resources in almost all the fields were exhausted. The OC transferred most (or all) its financial and physical capital, even most urban services and facilities, to other cities. On the other hand, the wide extent and long duration of oil activities did not give an opportunity for non-oil activities to be developed. Today, MIS therefore, is confronted by several social and economic problems. Unemployment, low income and poverty, lack of adequate education and health services are the obvious consequences of the decline in the oil industry of MIS, and the continuing, if very slow, growth of its population.

Now, MIS is faced with a real economic problem in the city and people's lives. Unemployment and deprivation are the two most obvious problems of the urban economy. Disappointment and hopelessness are extended among citizens when they cannot find a bright and hopeful outlook for the future. This can affect the moral and cultural values of people and in consequence their attitudes towards their city and their urban life. Also, cultural cohesion and social integration will be affected when economic difficulties overwhelm individuals' lives.

MIS still continues its life, in the absence of its original cause for existence, i.e. oil resources and industry, that have already been exhausted and dramatically declined. This means that MIS is involved in a serious struggle to find an essential foundation apart from oil resources, for its life. In other words, there have been some other reasons for its existing situation, and some other resources on which to build for its future. Cultural values, social relations and local ties are some of such reasons and resources. We shall attempt to clarify their role in the urban life of MIS through this study.

What has been described in the preceding pages of this chapter is a dominant common viewpoint of urban problems. We described the existing problems in MIS through an economic and material window. This is indeed, the window through which many scholars and people around the world look at urban problems (see Chapter 3). But, is such a narrow economic-materialistic approach capable of defining the problem and prescribe a solution? Do we need a broader and integrated approach for this purpose?

Now, a substantial challenge is happening between cultural and moral values, shared backgrounds, traditions and identity on the one side, and economic problems, material needs and individual interests on the other side. On the one hand MIS's citizens like their home city and their culture. On the other, they cannot find an opportunity for a better life in the city. While it seems that there are adequate human and material resources in or around the city, there is no significant plan and strategy for its future. What should be done for MIS? What are the indicators of quality of life? Are they merely summarised in terms of material benefits? Is it possible to resolve urban

socio-economic problems and revive people's cultural values simultaneously? How can we employ cultural values as the driving force of socio-economic regeneration?

However, proceeding this research in order to focus on the area of study the following basic questions arise:

1. Whether *Urban Regeneration* is merely an economic notion?
2. What is the role of "people" and their "Cultural Values" in urban life and the process of urban regeneration? And how can such an important role be implemented in the context of urban planning?
3. What should be done for such cities in decline, in the context of urban planning and policy towards social, economic and cultural regeneration?

The purpose of the next chapter is to draw a brief review of significant recent empirical and conceptual research in the area of both urban decline as a problem and urban regeneration policies as solutions. We shall concentrate on descriptive works answering the basic questions: what is urban decline, and what are the causes and consequences of urban decline? The next chapter also reviews dominant urban policies in UK, US and Iran.

# 3

## Urban Regeneration: a Tool or a Target?

### Introduction

During the last decades, a great number of cities in both developed and developing countries have suffered different types of socio-economic difficulties. Some are continuing to grow in population, many have experienced depopulation and increase of unemployment. In this context, there is a considerable body of literature examining the economic (more) and social (less) dimensions of both urban decline and urban regeneration policies during the last three decades. Indeed, most of the literature has focused on “*agencies*” rather than people’s lived experiences. However, so far little consideration has been given to the role of people, their attitudes and their cultural values as well as their experience and potentials.

The purpose of this chapter is to draw a brief review of significant recent research in terms of urban problems and urban regeneration strategies, in developed countries, and also show a picture of urban policy in Iran. The chapter consists of two sections. The first section concentrates on conceptual and empirical works concerning urban decline. In the second section, the author examines contemporary urban policies and strategies through Europe, North America and Iran experiences. The aim of this section is to investigate the scope and contents of dominant debates which can form the basis for an alternative approach to urban regeneration policy, in Chapter Four.

### 3.1. Urban Decline

The term "urban decline" presented the idea that the declining city is a city in trouble, a city not as economically or socially healthy as it used to be or as it should be. A wide range of explanations have been advanced in the literature to account for contemporary urban decline.

#### 3.1.1. What is "Urban Decline"?

To many, urban decline is concerned with population loss, as a measure of decline either because it actually shows decline from the city's desirable state, or because it is an indicator of broad difficulties.

For example, Bradbury *et al.*, (1982) claim that "urban decline" has both "descriptive" and "functional" meanings. In its descriptive sense, it refers to any decrease in such measures of size as population or employment. In its functional sense, urban decline means changes that somehow impair the functioning of a city or other urban phenomena. Urban decline is not limited to high rate of crime, dropping property values and rising taxes, but more important, decline can seriously affect the identity of those whose lives have transcended subsistence and whose social contributions appear in intellectual, artistic political, and even economic realms (Beauregard, 1993).

Beauregard believed that urban decline can be defined as something that causes urban residents failure to make the investment to institute social controls and build their environments. He argued that urban decline is more than a multidimensional empirical indicator and more than its surface manifestations; it is "multipresentational and related with symbolic resonance" (*ibid.*).

Cheshire (1986), found urban decline as the spatial concentration in large cities of social, economic and environmental problems such as high levels of unemployment and poverty, housing deterioration and decay of the urban infrastructure.

As the most interesting mechanism, both urban growth and decline have been considered as the reflection of the socio-economic pattern of organisation shared by each city. As Aydolat (1987) emphasises, urban decline is not the inevitable and ultimate form of urbanisation. Rather, it is the urban decline exhibited by certain forms of economic organisation which have become out dated because they are too narrowly specialised and hence incapable of readjustment. The central places are older than

specialised industrial cities and yet nowadays they enjoy a higher growth level (Aydolat, 1987).

Friedrichs (1993) defined urban decline as a common phenomenon in cities of all highly industrialised countries. Gutmann (1986) suggested that "urban decline" can be understood as the loss of a city's population or the loss of its urban functions, either economic, political or cultural.

Despite the breadth of some of these understandings, urban decline has primarily been measured by rising unemployment, decreasing population, increasing numbers of persons in public assistance, and plant-closing. A general component of these interpretations is that urban decline is the result of losing the relative economic position of the city in the wider market; i.e., the measures reflect a narrow economic conception

### 3.1.2. Causes of Urban Decline

Some urban economists believe that urban economic decline is initially the consequence of the reduction in the size of the manufacturing sector. For example, Clark (1989) claimed that national industrial decline was the most obvious reason for urban industrial decline. Clark (1989) also classified four significant conceptual points of view, each of which emphasises key causal factors. The first is structuralism, that found urban decline as both cause and consequence of shifts within the wider economic and social formation. The second idea was based on the principles of consumer supremacy and links "counterurbanisation with changes in the perceived attractions of urban and rural areas". Marxist theory, as the third group, presented urban decline as the product of the movement of capital to rural areas. According to the fourth assumption, urban decline is the result of national or sectoral planning policies (Clark, 1989).

Bradbury *et al.*, (1982), defined nine important historical factors and their influences as the causes of both urban growth and decline. They were:

1) Immigration from abroad, 2) Fertility rates, 3) Migration from farms, 4) Wars, 5) National economic condition, 6) Transportation, 7) Technological changes, 8) Location and status of minority groups, and 9) Income growth rate

Some commentators have argued that city decline was the direct result of a high degree of industrialisation. For instance, Aydolat (1987) believed that cities which were late started and tertiary oriented would never reach the high level of industrialisation

that old industrial cities had, and would probably never experience crisis. From these assumptions, decline would be predicted to occur if the initial industries (companies) lose market shares.

Wegener (1982) suggested that both exogenous and endogenous causes might affect the growth or decline of a region. Exogenous factors are supply and demand on national and international markets, new technologies or products, trade and labour regulations, or the availability of public subsidies. These make up the framework for regional development, which can hardly be changed by decision makers in the region itself. However, regions can respond in different ways to changes in their external framework by adapting their economic and spatial structure more or less efficiently to changing external conditions. These responses were the endogenous factors establishing the comparative advantage of a region competing with other regions for capital, jobs and people. He believed that the endogenous factors consist of public and private decisions. Public decisions are planning or implementation programmes by regional or subregional governments in the fields of industrial development, public housing, land use, transport, or public facilities. Private decisions comprise location, relocation and mobility decisions by private sectors such as firms, real estate investors, landlords, households, and individuals (Wegener, 1982). Wegener presents the key exogenous factors as economic. The key endogenous factors are then taken to be the role of the public sectors. This concept has focused on the actions of the agencies of local and regional government. Whilst the importance of endogenous development have been emphasised, the role of people in the processes of planning and decision making has not been clarified.

### 3.1.3. The Consequences of Urban Decline

For many, the consequences of urban decline appear in changes of employment and demographic data of the city. In general, the number of jobs decreases, leading to a process of selective out-migration to other areas. Hence population decline due to migration is the consequence of economic decline (Friedrichs, 1993). This assumption is supported by the finding of case-studies of urban change in European cities and North American metropolitan areas (Rust, 1975; Van den Berg *et al.*, 1982).

On the other hand some empirical studies show that population changes in a city are not necessarily the consequence of decline. There are many cities such as Stuttgart or Hanover which have no problems but are losing population. However, whilst many



cities which have problems such as Liverpool, are declining in population, there are others, such as Napoli, which are growing (Cheshire, 1986).

Bradbury *et al.*, (1982) hypothesised that urban decline in large cities leads to loss of population, normally, as households with high average incomes migrate out of the city and low income people have to remain in. Falling city population causes either higher per capita costs or cutbacks in services, or both. Also the political situation of such large cities which are losing population will be affected. Therefore, population losses in these cities might next cause losses of welfare for their remaining residents.

### 3.1.4. Theories

To analyse and explain causes, consequences and the process of urban decline a set of theories and hypotheses has been considered. As explained above, these have mostly concentrated on employment, population and economic aspects of this phenomenon.

Clark (1989) pointed out that development and decline were the result of migration and changes in the population size of the city. He believed that the correlation between demographic characteristics of the residents and the economic function of the city emphasised that the rate and direction of urban population change was highly determined by the location of industry. These links were explored through an examination of deindustrialisation and job losses in the city (Clark, 1989).

Clark (1989) also stressed that the pattern of urban economic decline was strongly size-related. He emphasised that, in many developed countries, the large cities have lost most jobs and have recorded the greatest rate of decline, while smaller centres and rural areas have expanded. Clark also recognised urban economic decline as the product of national economic problems. He pointed out that economic and population figures could show an obvious picture of urban decline (Clark, 1989).

He concluded that urban economic decline was the outcome of the interaction of manufacturing activity and the low level of industrial regeneration. Unless urban environments were entirely transformed, it was likely to continue, and even increase (*ibid.*).

Bradbury *et al.*, (1982) produced six groups of theories, to explain decline in the size and function of cities and metropolitan areas in the United States. These theories are:

1. Disamenity avoidance theory debates that households or business firms move away from inner cities to suburbs, because of high rates of negative characteristics such as crime and insecurity in the centre of large cities.

2. Tax avoidance theory argues that people or firms move to the suburbs because the tax in large cities is higher than in many small towns and surrounding suburbs.

3. Positive attraction theories state that people or business are moving from central cities to suburbs, in order to obtain quality features of life, such as lower residential density and better job opportunities.

4. Economic Evaluation theories discuss that large urban areas, and specific activities within them, maintain particular forms of development. This evaluation alters the combination and location of activities in ways unfavourable to maintaining those activities within large cities.

5. Biased Policy theories claim that public (and private) investment is determined by specific governmental policy. Such policies affecting households, and economic activities are biased either to the benefit of suburbs and against central cities, or in favour of some areas and against others.

6. Demographic Policy theories state that certain population growth trends affect adversely some cities and metropolitan areas. (Bradbury, 1982)

Although in some extent, there is similarity between the MIS situation and the above theories, Disamenity, tax or regional decentralisation were not the causes of decline in MIS. And, basically, there is no sign of migration from the city to the suburb areas of MIS.

Lees and Hohenberg, (1989) focused on "Rent" as the basic theory to illustrate their understanding of urban decline. They believed that urban decline was not a matter of "catastrophic change or change on levels of industrial production" but that it was based on shifts between contraction and recovery. According to this theory, a time of rising population growth led to increasing rents and urban incomes, since rich and powerful people, such as landowners were likely to live in town. In addition taxes and other government revenues flowed into the towns and then were spent there in part by bureaucrats. The clear result was a more flourishing urban economy both because of rising incomes and demand for luxuries and other urban products, goods and services. They predicted that urban decline began later than rural contraction, but lasts longer. They concluded that "where agriculture was healthy rural recovery triggered the growth of individual cities as well as enlarged marketing ties. Where agriculture was weaker

and bureaucrats diverted the surplus, cities other than the capital suffered, the result being a top-heavy urban system with weak linkages among cities" (Lees and Hohenberg, 1989)

This assumes the city is closely tied to the agricultural production in its region-again, not the case in MIS.

Friedrichs (1993) suggested the Product-Cycle Theory to explain the nature and process of urban decline. This theory has been found efficient to examine decline in the case study of the current research. Therefore, it will be considered in this section carefully.

Changes in the specification of products, changes in external demands, and lack of sufficient capability to deal with changing economic condition were addressed by Friedrichs (1993) as the main factors of his theory.

The diversity of an urban economic base has also played a significant role in this theory. Accordingly, a city is more influenced by product cycles if major industries are few, and hence the employment structure narrow. In other words this theory mostly applied where an urban economy was based upon a few (or, in the extreme case, such as MIS, a single) dominant industries. And, the existence of many dependent small firms and businesses would probably be subjected to product-cycle relocation forces.

Several consequences might be assumed where a single industry is dominant. In economic terms it would control the labour market; to prevent smaller companies from locating in the city due to the high wages paid by the dominant company or industry; and to lower the chances for related industries to enter, since large companies tend to create their own supplies (Lever, 1981).

Concerning the physical image and economic perspective of the city, the decline of the dominant industry might extend to the related industries and firms, leading to represent a negative image of the city or region, and would discourage the private sector for establishing new firms in this area; i.e., a downward spiral in the whole region.

Under the conditions outlined above, economic decline will encompass several sectors of the city's economy. Closing down plants or companies will cause unemployment, which in turn may over a longer period, lead to a rising number of households in need of public aid. Both changes have dramatic effects on the city's tax revenues. The city loses income and company taxes, while at the same time expenditure for public assistance and services increases. Due to lack of advanced and efficient

taxation system in the country the influence of tax was not important in the case of MIS.

This condition has been examined by Richardson, in his macro-economic model of urban decline. He pointed out that economic urban decline caused selective out-migration by reducing the demand for labour leading to lower tax revenues. Furthermore, he claims: "The demand for labour falls off more than supply, and tax payments decline more than public expenditures" (Richardson, 1987, p.61).

It might be said that both economic and social reasoning coincides with the assumption that greater diversity in the local economy leads to higher stability of a system, a city in our case. The general assumption is that economic diversity leads to complexity, which in turn leads to stability. Evidently, it is an empirical question as to which conditions prevail in a given city.

The above hypotheses are concerned with economic factors. They will now be related to the effects of demographic changes. The initial stage of urban growth, in this theory, is accompanied by the influx of labour. Declining cities would be characterised by a decreasing number of industries and those that remain employed would be concentrated in these fewer industries, decreasing overall wages and job opportunities.

This hypothesis was the starting point of the zero-growth model produced by Rust (1975). He proposed that individuals came to the city for employment, and job opportunities were generated by the developing industries. As a result, the initially well-balanced age structure changes toward an excess of residents in age group 15-25. Two decades later, the economy has declined, fewer people migrate to the city, but population has increased by the children of the former in-migrants. In the next stage, the children of the former in-migrants and the initial population seek employment. If the number of jobs in the city did not increase, the labour market would be unbalanced. Rust assumes that the younger and better-educated will have a higher capability for mobility. Hence, those older than 45 years and those with less years of schooling will remain in the city. This selective migration has been documented in empirical studies by other authors as well (Norton and Rees, 1979; Paterson and Muller, 1980) and is assumed to be one of the main reasons for rising inner-city poverty and crime (Bradbury *et al.*, 1982).

Rust (1975) also claimed that demographic and employment zero-growth might be accompanied by a "negative" selection of management personnel: innovative managers (and companies) would leave the city, leading to further reduction in the innovative forces.

According to Rust's model, due to a mismatch between the skills of the displaced workers and the skills required for the new employment opportunities, zero growth or even decrease will occur in the structure of the labour market of the city. That means that only a small number of those who lost their manufacturing jobs will qualify for the new jobs, for example, in banking, insurance or electronics, nor will most of them be willing to take an under qualified and low-paid job in the services, such as restaurants.

From the theory outlined above, two major conclusions can be made for the conditions of economic regeneration. First, city officials have to increase the diversity of their industries. Secondly, they have to redirect funds, allocating them to new industries and loans instead of a continued subsidy for old industries. Such strategies or programmes, however, may lead to a paradoxical situation: urban officials have to deny the demands of the old elite, but at the same time they need their financial and moral support to attract new industries, create a positive investment climate and a new image of the city (Rust, 1975).

It should be noted that, the model does not include the causes of decline, since they may vary from case to case. The model concentrates on the process of initial growth and subsequent decline. It seems that the extent and duration of decline are the two important factors which require careful consideration.

Overall, the review of this set of theories and concepts makes clear that the literature in urban decline are mostly interested in economic aspects of urban life. These theories, in particular the last two, help to explain what happened as well as what is happening in MIS, as a single industry economy-based city. They also help to provide a basis for policy development considering economic diversity rather than a single industry. However, they have focused on figures and trends such as production, population, employment, income, tax and so on to define and measure urban decline. This means that these theories are merely concentrated on city decline from an economic point of view, while social, cultural and political aspects of human life, which this research is concerned about, have not been respected sufficiently.

In the next stage, we shall review some well-known empirical works in this context, in order to have a clear picture of others' experiences in analysing and evaluating urban policies.

### 3.1.5. Empirical Research

Case studies of cities and their political, economic, and social changes can always assist us to understand, analyse and perhaps evaluate, the structural transformation that many other cities are experiencing. In the last decades, many American and European social scientists undertook valuable empirical research on urban problems. Some of these works will be considered here. This section investigates how others tackle urban decline, including the window through which they have looked at the problem.

Some urban scholars, particularly in the US, focus on race, class and central city problems, such as economic reinvestment, black political power, and the concentration of racial minorities and the poor.

For instances, Darden *et al* (1987), identified serious decline in population and employment of the Detroit inner city. They examined the irregular development within the metropolitan region and serious race and class inequalities as shown in income, occupation and education between Detroit's mostly black population and the city's suburbs. They argue that the rapid growth generated such inequalities and segregation. These got worse with urban decline due to the changes in the car industry. Darden *et al* (1987) emphasised the negative effects of racism on the region. They showed how racism both has contributed to the social inequalities in the city and has been used to create obstacles to solve urban problems.

During the development period of MIS, the increasing immigrants from abroad and other parts of the country to MIS along with the domination of foreigners on the oil industry caused serious social inequalities and segregation in the city (see Chapter 8).

The role of the growth ideology in shaping the metropolis was emphasised in the case study of "Chicago". Squires *et al* (1987) defined economic development as an essential precondition to solving social problems which must therefore be promoted at almost any cost. They first described the decline of Chicago in population and its economic problems associated with the relative decline in manufacturing throughout the old Manufacturing Belt. They examined the class and race differences between Chicago and its suburbs. Then, they analysed the three different types of Chicago's redevelopment policies, redevelopment infrastructure expansion, joint development with private developers, and private development (e.g., hotels and offices). Finally, they criticised the strategies of economic growth to solve the city's social problems while showing little concern with uneven development, both spatially and by class. They argued that urban decline in Chicago did not arise from the lack of growth, but from unsuitable policies that supported a spatial and social pattern of uneven development. Therefore, the promotion of more growth as the solution to big city problems would

only have the paradoxical effect of further concentration of wealth and thereby intensifying the social costs of development. They argued that problems of Chicago were qualitative as well as quantitative, political as well as economic (Squires *et al*, 1987).

Similarly, the present study attempts to draw a multi-dimensional picture of urban decline in MIS. While the history of MIS shows that the existing problem of the city is the result of uneven socio-spatial growth and lack of suitable policies to control such a rapid growth, this research does not focus on economic development as the essential precondition for solving social problems.

Dennis Gale (1987) defined Washington D.C as a model of the post-industrial city based upon an advanced service economy. Through a demographic analysis, he pointed out that Washington, D.C. consists of two cities, of a large middle class with great "gentrification" and pockets of poverty. Gale also examined the lack of racial, social, or economic integration within the central city. He found that Washington's population loss had been slowed and its new downtown had grown rapidly leading to social inequalities and segregation in the city (Gale, 1987).

From an economic point of view based on the single product economy concept, the story of economic decline in Detroit city is quite similar to the case study of this research (MIS). But, the socio-cultural conditions of MIS society is completely different from these American cities. The racism and class conflict are not obvious problems of MIS, while they have been stressed in Chicago, Detroit and Washington D.C. At the same time, the common point is that in all of these cities, including MIS, urban decline has not been the simple result of a lack of growth, but from inadequate strategic plans and policies to control and manage uneven development. At a greater distance, this research aims to show that the endogenous factors are more important than the exogenous ones

Bradbury *et al* (1982), in their valuable research concerning American cities, found evidence of declining population and employment figures, together with rising unemployment and crime rates and low incomes for cities. They analysed the nature and extent of urban decline, which was defined "descriptively" as decreasing population and employment, and "functionally" as net welfare loss (Bradbury *et al*, 1982). Although their conclusions were not different from those of other authors, their comprehensive review and presentation of data are quite useful for the purposes of the present study, because, they emphasise the link between economic and social issues. But still the cultural dimension of urban life has not been explored in these studies.

Goe and Shanahan (1991) undertook an empirical study in terms of urban decline and rebuilding the economies of industrial-based metropolitan areas. They focused on the restructuring of the US economy. They represented two hypotheses, first that the negative consequences of restructuring in the manufacturing sector had been concentrated unevenly in the metropolitan economies of the Midwest of the US, and second, regardless of regional location, industrial-based metropolitan economies with higher level of manufacturing employment have a strong potential for industrial decline.

An analytical framework was employed to test these hypotheses. They defined patterns of economic restructuring across industrial-based metropolitan areas of the US during the 1970-85 period and examined the distribution of those patterns across the US regions. Their analytical framework was built upon the following three conditions: first, a region should have experienced a continuous, long-term rate of decline in manufacturing employment that was higher than the rate of decline in the national level. Second, a region should suffer a decline in its share of manufacturing employment that exceeds the national employment base. Finally, the growth rate of non-manufacturing employment in the region should be less than the national rate.

They focused on decline in three main measures: first a comparison of change in the rate of manufacturing employment in regional and national level, over a certain time interval; second, a comparison of change in the regional share of manufacturing employment with change in the national share of manufacturing employment over a specified time. Third, a comparison of the regional rate of change in non-manufacturing employment to the national rate of this figure.

They concluded that, in the US context, although, a proportion of industrial-based metropolitan areas successfully developed, and/or successfully competed as locations for non-manufacturing industries, the majority of industrial-based metropolitan areas in the US did not achieve their objectives in regenerating their economies over the 1970-85 period (Goe and Shanahan, 1991). These results also demonstrated that the improvement of exogenous factors could not essentially resolve local economic problems. This means that we need to consider endogenous factors rather than merely exogenous ones.

Turning from the literature on contemporary US cities, it is interesting to look at some valuable research on European cities. Lees and Hohenberg (1989) in their investigation attempted to answer the following questions: What does it mean to say that a city has "declined"? How widespread, drastic and long-lasting was the urban crisis? Did all towns of a region share problems equally, or were there systematic differences in the intensity of urban decline by size of town? Did rural -urban relations



shift as cities entered periods of difficulty? They examined three cases where urban problems have been well documented: the towns in three regions of the Spanish Empire between approximately 1550 and 1750. They focused on population and industrial function of the city as the two most important dimensions of urban decline. They argued that if the population figures for the cities and towns were compared over time, the dimensions of growth and decline would appear clearly. As a result, the proportion of the total population residing in towns fell while the rural proportion grew. This deurbanization accompanied the restructuring of inter-city relationships within these regions: the largest cities and the agricultural sector expanded in local importance at the same time as medium-sized towns lost status and influence. Moreover they showed that towns that lost some industrial functions had alternative ways of restoring economic health: ways dependent upon the particular urban-rural and inter-urban relationships that existed in their region.

The experience of MIS shows that while economic decline evidently exists in the city, the population size has not really decreased. This means that there are some other important factors in people's lives which should be identified and determined in urban investigations.

Cheshire *et al.* (1986), in their study of western European cities, review several areas of literature concerned with the measurement of spatial economic and social differences and attempt to provide a systemic approach to how the space economy operates for ranking the incidence of urban problems. They accumulated a very large data base, almost 200 variables from more than 100 cities, during the research. The key indicators of their research were (1) Income, (2) Unemployment, (3) Migration Index and, (4) Travel Demand Index.

They distinguish (minimally) between urban problems associated with decline and those associated with growth. Through the measurement of income per capita, unemployment, immigration and travel demand factors, they conclude that the causes and consequences of urban decline in different cities are different, i.e. specific problems of different cities are very different and appropriate policies could be different (Cheshire *et al.* 1986). These results also support the idea that the case of MIS should be considered in its own socio-economic context, rather than copying both others' descriptions and prescriptions.

Philip Aydalot (1987) concentrated on the relationship between urban size and urban-function. He disagreed with those who claimed that the development of cities followed a size-related pattern. He identified many cities which continued their growth despite their size. He believed that the growth or decline of cities neither depends on

their size nor on a unique process of evolution, but on the fact they belong to a city type. He argued that every urban type and specialisation in an urban function followed its particular process of evolution, depending on economic circumstances.

Aydalot studied French cities for the period between 1975-82. He divided urban units into 18 types according to the region and size of population. He concluded that, small cities of less than 70,000 population, because of their capability to preserve their manufacturing employment, experienced a slightly higher development than the large cities. He also pointed out that a complex urban system development depends on its ability to promote economic activities, to create jobs, to attract people, and to develop a function that would be useful for the rest of the economy (Philip Aydalot, 1987). While he emphasised that urban growth was no more than an urban outlet of an economic approach to spatial development he did not consider socio-cultural aspects of both causes and consequences of urban decline, in his investigation.

Some analytical urban modelling has also been employed by some urban commentators and economists to identify the important elements of urban decline and their relationships. The model suggested by Wegener(1982) aimed to simulate roles and relationships among industry, residential developers, and households; the resulting migration and commuting patterns; the land use development; and the impacts of public programmes and policies in the field of industrial development, housing and infrastructure. In other words, the model was examined to establish the link between major economic and technological changes such as economic recessions and sectoral changes.

The area modelled was the urban region of Dortmund in the Federal Republic of Germany. Employment, housing, and population were used as significant urban indicators, for this urban modelling, while it focused on the employment sector. The impact of new life styles and changing consumption patterns upon the spatial structure of the region was also considered by this model. The housing sector established the link between population and physical structure. The population sector of the model was where long-term demographic and social changes in fertility, household formation patterns, income distribution, life styles, and consumption patterns were introduced into the model. The population sector is linked to the physical structure of the region by the housing market and the land and construction market, and the employment sector by the transport market.

Wegener concluded with three main scenarios. The first scenario was based on a summary of recent employment forecasts for Nordrhein-Westfalen. The second scenario was a "growth" scenario. This scenario, was based on increasing regional employment

and by reducing outmigration and increasing immigration. The third scenario was a "decline" scenario which built upon the assumption of reducing regional employment, increasing outmigration and by reducing immigration (Wegener, 1982).

This study helps to understand how different aspects of city life can be seen in a systemic way. Identifying important urban indicators and the way of measuring their relationships together with different general scenarios in tackling urban decline are quite useful. At the same time, it seems that some qualitative elements of urban decline, such as social changes, have been neglected.

Borouwer and Nijkamp (1986) provided a model and discussed the relevance of qualitative calculus for urban policy modelling. They argued that the qualitative calculus model could be regarded as a method to produce (either static or dynamic) models with qualitative information about the impacts between variables. They claimed that if a combination of qualitative and quantitative information about the interaction between variables was available, a stepwise selection producer could be employed to obtain solutions from dynamic and static policy models. In order to examine the relationships between, and the effectiveness of variables on, each other, eleven significant factors were considered through their model

They explored how far the development of urban entrepreneurial attractiveness would be encouraged by increasing the supply of labour and intermediate services, the development of economic base sectors, as well as entrepreneurial stimulation attractiveness. The development of economic base sectors was controlled by growth of urban entrepreneurial attractiveness and the demand for services. The simulation model also described the development of residential attractiveness which depended upon the situation of the housing market, the urban labour market, the balance between demand and supply of consumption goods, and the growth of population. They emphasised that total demand for consumption goods was determined by the population size. The growth of population size depended upon the supply of housing and was influenced by exogenous factors. The supply of consumption goods would rise when the difference between demand and supply increased. The supply of intermediate services was based on the difference between demand and supply of such services with a lag of one period. The supply of labour was determined by the growth of population and increase in the number of immigrants. Finally, they pointed out, the demand for labour was a function of the development of the growth of economic base sectors, the supply of intermediate services, and the supply of consumption goods (Borouwer and Nijkamp, 1986).

Although this integrated model can help describe and explain the economic and demographic changes in MIS, it hasn't considered the interaction between socio-cultural and economic factors of urban life.

Overall, it can be concluded that there has been a considerable body of literature examining the economic and socio-demographic dimensions of urban life during the last three decades. Some of it helps in understanding the experience of MIS and the possible directions of urban policy. The literature show that exogenous factors play a significant role in urban economic changes, while endogenous factors either have not seriously been considered or government has been recognised as the primary source and the most important endogenous factor.

However, so far little consideration has been given to the role of local people, their attitudes and their cultural values as such. Unemployment, low income and depopulation are the common figures in most conceptual and empirical works in terms urban decline works. However, although some factors in various approaches to urban problems are similar, others, such as overcrowding, congestion, self-built and unplanned housing, and underemployment, can be quite different. Problems of both growth and decline exist within many cities in the world but neither their causes nor the consequences are the same. Therefore both for policy and conceptual reasons, it is essential to treat cities in their own context separately. Investigating urban decline in MIS, in a completely different part of the world, needs particular consideration and precise urban analysis to explore the reasons, the potentials and the alternatives solutions for urban regeneration. So, the present study aims to widen out from a narrow economic focus to recognise and involve some socio-cultural potentials, in particular local people, for endogenous regeneration.

In order to tackle such urban problems a great number of urban strategies have been initiated. Understanding such policies and exploring the extent of their achievement require an overview on urban regeneration policies during the past decades.

### **3.2. Urban Regeneration**

Since 1960s, in many countries, in particular West Europe and North America, a great attention has been paid by governments and policy makers to tackling urban difficulties. While a complex, multi-dimensional urban decline has been recognised, policy frameworks have been shifted from concentrating on public sector redevelopment and investment to involving the private sector with public private participation, and

relying on the market based economy. Such efforts led, in Britain to the emergence of the term *urban regeneration* as a term for a policy responses to urban decline (Moore and Richardson, 1989; Fox et al., 1991; Healey, 1992; Turok, 1992). Urban regeneration has mostly been defined as a particular approach to city revitalisation, focusing on inner city problems emphasising local physical redevelopment, and investment in building and urban infrastructure (Boyle, 1988; CLES, 1990). At the same time, various urban initiatives such as housing policies, community empowerment and cultural policies have also been termed as urban regeneration policy.

### 3.2.1. Background

The aim of this section is to review research on urban regeneration policies particularly in the UK, the US, and Iran in order to understand various urban initiatives, extract the lessons and find out the (possible) gaps in such works in theory and practice.

#### Urban Regeneration Policy in the US

Most American cities grew from small towns in the second half of the 19th century. The development of urban infrastructure and facilities in this period did not sufficiently accompany such rapidly growing cities. Between the 1930s and 1960s, most urban initiatives in the US focused on central business district development, and were often established by a combination of state and municipal funding (Teaford, 1986; Lynn, 1993; Wagner *et al.*, 1995, Rogowsky *et al.*, 1995). By the 1960s some urban policies looked beyond the downtown to the poor neighbourhoods. The *War on Poverty* initiated a number of social programmes which would generally consider housing, education or social services, job training, and anti-crime programmes. A large amount of public funding was provided to achieve the objectives of this policy (Atkinson and Moon, 1994).

By the early 1970s, the emphasis was shifting from assessing individuals getting skills and quality life to establishing industrial units (Teaford, 1986). Revenue sharing programmes were initiated which were followed by the *Community Development Block Grants* (CDBG), along with the *Urban Development Action Grants*. These were the primary tools of urban regeneration policies in the later 1970s and through the 1980s. *Community Development Corporations* (CDCs) were characterised by economic development (including housing) projects and community-based boards. They were normally established by neighbourhood groups, and local government mostly provided seed money and sometimes guidelines. Some commentators believe that during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, residents' participation was mostly considered as only informing and consulting people, allocating local communities to the margin of

urban regeneration policies (McArthur, 1993). Although in these policies, people were considered and did get involved in urban regeneration, still they were not left to act. Others made decisions and plans for people.

In the 1980s the local government cut back its role as a supplier of low income housing. In consequence, the CDCs gained the opportunity to produce low income housing, both through construction and improvement, in many low income areas (McDevitt, S., 1996)

In the 1990s, after about twenty years of activities, CDCs found that economic development was not enough. The more an individual organisation learned about the neighbourhood it served, the more needs became apparent. Therefore, they claim that:

“we are moving into the field of human development in far greater measure, because of the disappearance of family unit and conditions in public housing communities” (quoted by McDevitt, 1996, p. 12)

Recently, there have been many fundamental criticisms of the previous urban policies during the past three decades (Wagner *et al.*, 1995). For instance, Curiss Lynn, in his report to president Clinton, emphasised that the results of “trickle - down” economics had brought about two “separate and unequal” societies with increasing poverty, crime, class tension and race tension among excluded people in disadvantaged urban area. He emphasised that what is urgently essential is investment in people, and then “using those investments as much as possible for reconstruction of our cities” (Lynn, 1993). This emphasises an essential shift from property-led urban regeneration to social development-led urban regeneration, which is also stressed in the present research.

### **Urban Regeneration Policy in the UK**

In the UK, urban regeneration policies have been considered since the middle of the 1960s. In the period from 1945 to the mid-1960s, there was not a systematic attempt to identify problems, and in consequence no efficient policy to follow. The social dimension was ignored and physical development was emphasised. At the same time, it was believed that the welfare state would deal with questions of social and economic development.

The existence of city problems was recognised in the UK first, in the late 1960s, when the British government recognised the problems of urban decline in the American cities and the US government initiatives to tackle such problems. Some urban

commentators believe that urban regeneration policies in the UK were strongly influenced by American ideas and experience (Atkinson and Moon, 1994).

In this period, the theoretical understanding of urban problems concentrated on culture and social exclusion. The Cycle of Deprivation and the Culture of Poverty were the two dominant concepts which described mechanisms and processes of urban deprivation leading to social problems in such cities. Urban policies, therefore, focused on “compensatory” education facilities to provide the opportunity for all children to escape the cycle of deprivation.

In the early 1970s, it was believed that the problems of inner cities resulted from industrial decline in the older industrial cores of cities. The government concentrated on the employment problems rather than culture. The *Urban Programmes* (UP) and *Community Development Projects* (CDPs), were introduced to tackle such problems. The original ideas of the CDPs were about culture of poverty. But the action plans which went along with the CDPs identified the economic causes of the problem, drawing on neo-Marxist analysis.

From the mid 1970s under the Labour government the policies were initiated and implemented by the more powerful local government. In this period economic decline was recognised as the principal cause. The 1977 White Paper emphasised the role of economic and environmental decline, its impacts on social problems and the area focus remained as the main factors in urban initiatives. Thus, local economic development policies to assist the local establishment of firms and job creation was the main objective of urban renewal policies (Atkinson and Moor, 1994, Cameron and Davoudi, 1996).

Under the Conservative government, urban policy was modified and in turn been assessed, within four themes: the issue of co-ordination; problem definition and policy formulation, the search for efficiency; and partnership (Lawless, 1991)

In the 1980s, the Thatcher government reduced the role of local government and increase the role of the private-sector in urban regeneration policies. The focus on the main idea of property development-led urban regeneration was upon using derelict land with commercial development potential (private sector) to create new jobs for people. The *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs) were the obvious outcomes of such policies. The new urban policies under the Conservative government firstly, transferred power from local government to private-sector agencies and secondly, changed the priority from reviving the industrial economy to a focus on commercial activities, services, high tech and leisure development.

The key concept of urban regeneration in the 1990s has been an integrated approach combining economic and social needs under the *City Challenge* initiative. The City Challenge objectives have been to concentrate on the problems of disadvantaged communities and claims to provide an integration of physical, economic and social regeneration, i.e. it aims to address social exclusion in both material and cultural dimensions. That means that this recent policy has shifted from the land and commercial development approach to a more “people-centred” idea of urban regeneration. The policy includes education and training programmes to improve local people’s skills and also initiatives for community development.

Some urban researchers, for example Cameron and Davoudi (1996), believe that although recent urban regeneration policy under the City Challenge programme has considered both material and cultural dimensions of social exclusion, still there is not sufficient linkage between excluded local people and the mainstream concern with jobs opportunity and community empowerment.

### **Urban Development Policy in Iran**

In order to understand the nature of urban development and policy making in Iran today, it is necessary to review very briefly the history and characteristics of the planning system in this country. Three important periods can be identified for the history of urban development in contemporary Iran:

- 1) Before the second world war period 1925-1940
- 2) After the second world war 1941-1979
- 3) Post Islamic revolution since 1980

We try to show the evolution of urban development planning in Iran through these three historical periods.

#### *Before the World War II 1925-1940*

The first attempts to change the picture of Iran’s cities were made by Reza Shah, in 1930, when he introduced a strong governmental act which encouraged rapid modernisation. These attempts mostly concentrated on physical changes in the cities including widening the roads, constructing new buildings, cross-streets and squares and providing adequate space for car manoeuvre in the historical parts of the city, which were mostly located in the centre of the city. These physical changes were implemented without any consideration to the socio-cultural function of different parts of cities and their relations to people’s culture and life style. Inevitably, such a policy led



to distraction of many ancient and historical buildings which could not fit in rapidly modernising cities. The municipality was the institution in charge of such an urban policy. In this period, urban policy, in fact, was used as a practical mechanism for controlling and directing urban development, without any plan or policy for the rapid growth of population, immigration and land use planning (Clark, 1981).

#### *Post-war Period 1941-1979*

In the second period (1941-1979), under Mohammed Reza Shah, governmental intervention for rapid modernisation was continued. Indeed, such an urban policy was a part of a long-term development plan for the country, which was initiated in 1948, as a post-war phenomenon. However, producing the national development plan was the first scientific rational planning activity in Iran.

The first national development plan produced for the period 1948-55 was only implemented for two years due to the nationalisation of the oil industry and the subsequent events. This plan focused on agriculture, housing and the provision of water and electricity (Razaghi, 1988).

The main strategy of the second plan, 1955-62, was also to encourage agricultural development, while concentrating on transportation and communication. The period of the third plan was reduced to five years, from 1963 to 1967. For the first time urban development and housing were seen as independent items in the whole plan with a limited share in the budget. The significant change in the fourth plan (1968-72) was a sharp decline in the budget of the agriculture sector and giving priority to the mining and industry sector. The financial resources of the fifth plan (1973-77) dramatically increased due to the rise of oil price. The main strategy of this plan was devoted to defence, while the share of urban development and housing sectors were reduced (Madani pour, 1990).

Overall, in this era, the city was considered as an economic tool for rapid modernisation rather than a socio-cultural settlement. This strategy at the urban level focused on physical changes through municipal force. At the same time, it tried to institutionalise all such policies through amending a set of laws to provide municipalities with more power and autonomous function.

Two significant urban policies can be recognised in this period. The first was establishing new towns as a response to fast growing cities and huge immigration from rural areas to cities. The second was the emergence of metropolitan areas. This was an inevitable result of fast growth of big cities like Tehran. This led to the emergence of many planned and unplanned neighbourhoods surrounding big cities. Then the most

important task of government was to provide urban infrastructure and social services for such settlements.

### *Spatial/Physical Development Planning*

The first spatial plan for the country was drawn when the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development was established in 1975. The plan was to set the spatial structure of the country considering the resources and potential of urban and rural settlements, while it was based on the aims and objectives of national economic plan. It had also to take into account the development of the present and future towns and cities. Urban plans were to be produced in accordance with the national spatial plan. The Plan and Budget Organisation was recognised as the responsible institution for the plan (VMS, 1977, 1982).

### *After the Islamic Revolution*

The concept of development planning, in general, has been carefully considered by Iran's constitution which has been established after the revolution, in 1980. As a significant spatial strategy the Islamic constitution emphasises equality in regional development:

*"there should be no discrimination with regard to benefits to be gained from the use of natural resources, the utilisation of funds at the provincial level, and the distribution of economic activities among the provinces and various regions of the country. This is so that every region will have within its reach capital and opportunity to fulfil its needs and develop its skills (principle 48)"*

Participation and consultation are also emphasised in principles 3 and 7 respectively. Particularly, principle 3 accepts participation of all the people in determining their political, economic, social and cultural destiny.

Elected councils, both spatial (provincial, urban region, city, district and villages) and sectoral (in agriculture, industry, trades, education, culture) are recognised as organs of public participation and co-operation progress (principles 7, 100, and 104). The strongest of these councils is the Supreme Council of the Provinces, in which each province has a representative. The council has the right to make plans within the limits of its duties (principle 102) and is superior to the governors and all other provincial government officials (principle 103).

The constitution thus provided the planners with the ingredients needed to institute a fairly progressive, decentralised, and participatory type of spatial or territorial planning. Councils are to act as the cornerstone of this new approach.

### *The Planning System*

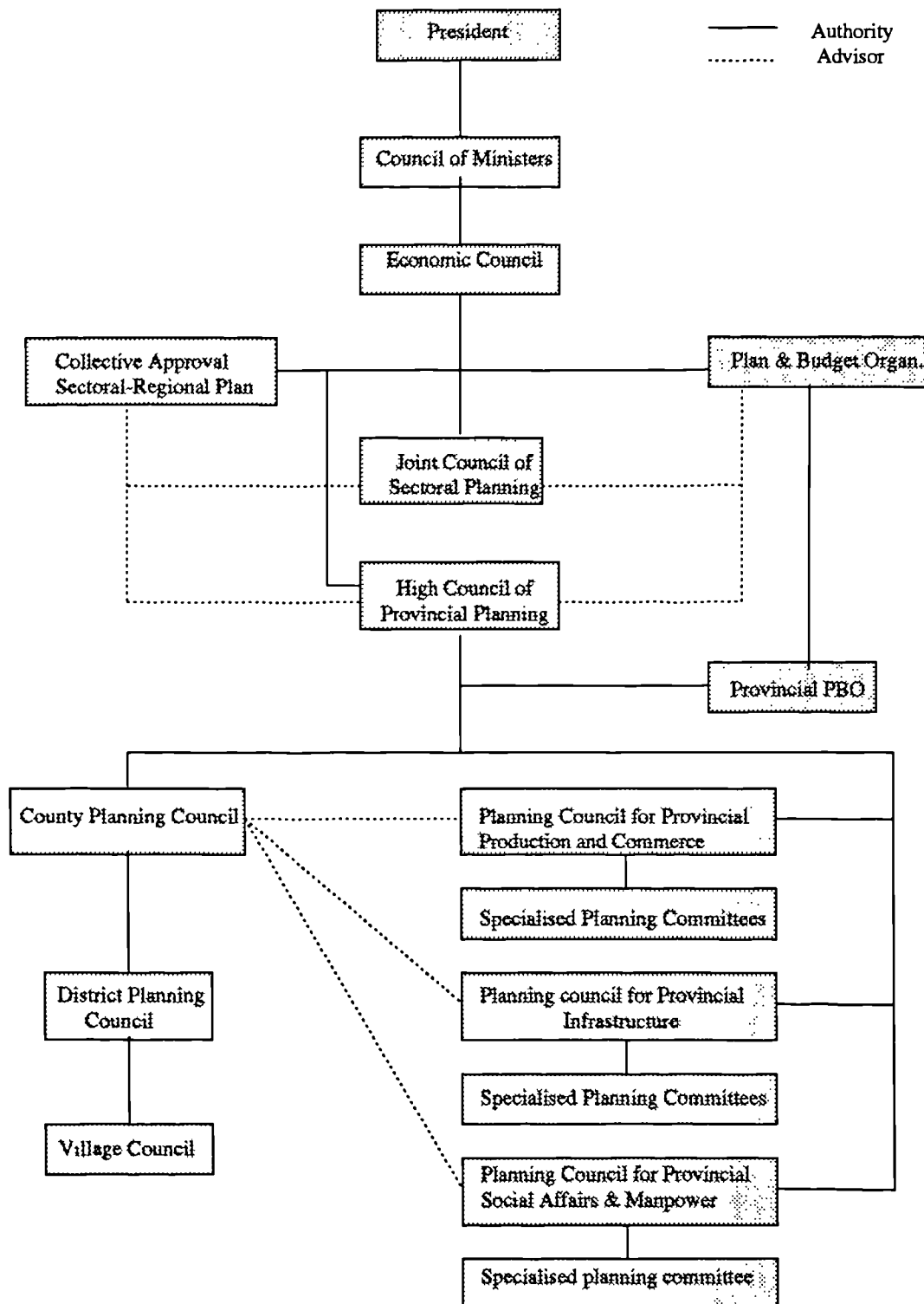
In January 1982, the Plan and Budget Organisation (PBO) submitted a document to the Economic Council outlining “*The Planning System*”. In this new system regional planning received more attention. The system explicitly recognises that a realistic plan for any region can only be prepared by those who work (as planners or in other related profession) in that region. Furthermore, this can encourage local residents to have more effective participation in the planning affairs (Razavi and Vakil, 1984).

The new “bottom-up, top-down” planning system is illustrated in Fig. 3.1. The flow of information and projects proposals starts at the local level (village, town and city), and then goes through the higher levels to the provincial level. The provincial planning and political authorities analyse the information and proposals using the central government’s sectoral/regional guidelines and prepare a provincial plan and a list of major sectoral projects in the form of proposals, which are then submitted to the PBO and the corresponding ministries.

Each ministry analyses and modifies the proposals to arrive at its own sectoral plan with a regional distribution and sends the results to the PBO, where the sectoral the regional plans are consolidated into a unified national plan consistent with the development targets and goals issued by the Council of Ministries and the Islamic Parliament (Amirahmadi, 1986).

After modifications and approval, it is sent back to the PBO. The regional planning section, with the help of sectoral planning bureau, prepares proposals for regional distribution of sectoral targets and submits them to the Regional Planning Council for preparation of detailed regional plans, consisting of development projects in each sector and region. The detailed plan is then announced to the provincial planning council. Each provincial council utilises a similar procedure to allocate the budget among the counties, districts, and villages.

Fig. 3.1 Organisation of Planning System of the Islamic Republic of Iran



Source: The Planning System, Plan and Budget Organisation, 1982

The framework remains essentially centralised on a sectoral basis. While information flow, proposal making, low-level budget allocation, and implementation are decentralised, decision making regarding targets and resource allocation remains centralised and sectorally determined. Allocation of the centrally determined provincial budgets to various development projects remains at the discretion of the provincial authorities insofar as they take account of centrally determined sectoral targets and guidelines. The only programmed and direct spatial activity of the Islamic Republic thus far concerns pre-planning studies at the regional and local levels for preparation of the basic design for spatial planning. These studies provide a detailed picture of resource availability, potentials, constraints, and problems at various spatial levels to be used as a guide for future spatial planning.

### *Urban Planning and Policy*

Urban planning in Iran has basically meant to provide the policies for managing fast growing cities. The actual process of urban planning and policy strongly focuses on physical development, while being carried out by the architect-dominated private consultants (Madanipour, 1990).

Prior to 1979 physical planning at the city level overemphasised the role of the Master Plan. Planning was indeed about the preparation of plans and little else. Like many other countries, large scale reshaping of Iran's cities took place where master plans were formulated without adequate consideration to the fabric of cities and to the capacity of the urban system to respond (Ghanbari, 1989). And more significantly there has been no place for people's ideas and attitudes.

In fact, the 1979 Revolution and the start of the imposed war (Iran-Iraq) of 1980 caused a massive population movement from affected cities to other cities and rural areas and from rural areas (in safe regions) to cities. The policy makers, therefore, have paid a great attention to the rapid growth of physical fabric and attempted to use town planning laws to control this growth.

Managing urban form and its physical growth has continued the approach of the earlier forms of planning in 1930s, and has continued after the Islamic revolution. The main characteristics of the process of urban policy and planning in Iran has been formed by two different, sometimes disconnected agencies. Planning the future of the city, on the one hand, is carried out the production of a comprehensive master plan for the city. Such a master plan is produced by private consultants and finally will be approved by the High Council of Town Planning as a sub-division of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. On the other hand, the current urban development activities are

controlled by the municipality system. The municipality is part of the Ministry of Interior, which is in charge of guide plans for smaller towns. At the same time the Plan and Budget Organisation makes plans for development and spatial planning at the national scale. The diversity of these various agencies of planning and decision making has inevitably caused some conflicts and disorders (Madanipour, 1990).

After the Islamic Revolution, the first 5 year plan for the period of 1983-87, with a long term 20 year plan has been produced. The implementation of the plan was delayed due to the war problems, and started in 1989. The main spatial strategy of this plan was a rational geographic distribution of population and activities, emphasising organisation, regulation of links and consolidation of ties between population centres and organised network of rural and tribal regions.

However, the deficiencies and structural problems of urban development and policy have been summarised by the PBO in 1987. These included:

- the lack of essential mechanisms to mobilise the non-governmental resources;
- lack of a comprehensive national and regional planning for housing and urban development which would incorporate urban planning;
- ambiguities in identification of urban land; and
- legal contradiction between the agencies involved.

Other problems emphasised the weakness of municipalities; the imbalance in the urban system; inefficiency in laws and regulation; and lack of implementation of master plans (PBO, 1987).

Overall, the main objectives of urban policy, after the Revolution, were concentrated on the

- provision of long term national and regional spatial plan;
- updating the comprehensive-master plans of large cities;
- reinforcing municipalities; improvement in public transport; and
- giving priority to the redevelopment of the old quarters in order to control urban expansion (PBO, 1987, Madanipour, 1990).

Reviewing the planning system and process in Iran shows that urban planning and policy making in Iran has not existed as an autonomous activity. Planning is

administered by architects rather than planning professionals. Iranian city planning is mainly based on comprehensive master plans and civil engineering and building contracts. This in turn indicates the focus on financing and technology. Furthermore, municipalities have a long history of importance at city levels despite the fact that they suffer from a shortage of trained personnel, in addition to which they provide the only formal link between the local people and the government at the urban level. In general terms, therefore, it can be said that planning and urban policy in Iran is of a centralised nature with a tendency towards regional planning and too rigid to allow more flexibility (Ghanbari, 1989).

Although, the evaluation of planning in Iran is outside of the scope of this thesis, it is clear that the main characteristics of urban problems in Iran, like many other developing countries, are rather different from developed countries. In fact, fast growing cities and huge immigration from rural areas to cities have been seen as the most important reasons for urban problems. So, urban policies and initiatives are mostly concentrated on controlling, and managing such a rapid growth.

Aims and objectives of urban policy and planning in Iran still concentrate on physical development through strong intervention of the government. While the constitution strongly emphasises people's participation in planning process, there is no clear and strong application for such participation. Furthermore, the relationships between various aspects of urban development, in social, environmental, economic and cultural dimensions, have not been clarified adequately in theory and practice. This means that the urban policy approach in Iran, like many other countries around the world, consists of various ideas and solutions which are separate and unintegrated. Perhaps, we need an integrated approach and system as well, to bring together all dimensions in a systematic way. This helps to understand the city, urban life and people better, and also to make a comprehensive plan more precisely.

Considering recent literature, in Europe and America, concerning urban regeneration policies shows that most research interests in this context have concentrated on the following four policies: property development, housing, cultural policies, and community development. To illustrate the dominant debates in the context of such policies and urban regeneration objectives, some instances in each field are discussed.

### 3.2.2. Urban Regeneration and Property Development

In the early 1980, under a common parallel approaches in the US and the UK, the strategy of property development led urban regeneration has been shaped. The main aim of this strategy was the removal of private sector supply-side constraints and the attraction of private investment. The *Urban Development Corporation* were key agencies in this strategy in Britain. There is a wide range of literature considering the role and influence of the UDCs in British urban regeneration (Batlet, 1989; Lawless, 1989, 1991; Parkinson, 1990; Healey, 1991, 1992; Imrie and Thomas, 1993).

The UDCs became in Britain a central institutional mechanism of contemporary urban policy. As Lawless (1991) notes, the UDCs were appointed by central government to oversee the physical regeneration of specific localities, primarily by bypassing the traditional deliverers of urban policy, local government. Their original remit was set out by the 1980 Act, with the focus on property-led regeneration. In fact, UDCs were started as commercial organisations but forced after 1988 to support local communities:

"Urban Development Corporations can not be regarded as a success if buildings and land are regenerated but the local community are by-passed and do not benefit from regeneration"

(House of Commons, Employment Committee, 1988)

Focusing upon the recent experience in the UK, the urban initiative of property development-led urban regeneration has been considered in several academic studies.

Patsy Healey (1991, 1992) discussed the strategy of urban regeneration through the property development process and the role of the private sector in this concern. She summarised such a strategy as: "economic development, targeted to local/urban economies, via property development, through private enterprise, targeted to sites/zones, expressed via projects/entrepreneurs". She then evaluated this strategy through four alternative models of the property development process and its effects on local economic development and "institutional capacity". She pointed out that although the "production and management of the built environment" has an important role in local economic development, how this occurred varied in time and place.

She emphasised that the primary aim of property development policy was to shift from national policy and public subsidy towards a situation where the private sector determined the place, the extent, the form of the projects and as well as providing investment finance. The examined research show that in practice the public sector has



under taken projects, made primary investments, provided land and infrastructure, co-ordinated and managed development process, and has presented to the private sector when the risk has been minimised and subsidised (Healey *et al*, 1992). Property development policy, she believed, assisted people to buy their own accommodation, improved and modernised the environment, and produced some job opportunities, in the low-paid service sector. In contrast, such urban policy caused some loss of people, a number of local firms suffered from the unfavourable competition, and the economic benefits were national rather than local (*ibid.*).

Many social researchers have criticised the strategy of property development-led urban regeneration. They have generally emphasised that property development has had little contribution to city revitalisation (Imrie and Thomas, 1993; Turok, 1992; Parkinson, 1989).

Michael Parkinson, through examining urban policy in the UK under Thatcherism, suggested that urban regeneration required a broader outlook and comprehensive approach to deal with education, training, economic, physical development and social improvement rather than a policy led by a single activity, that is physical regeneration (Parkinson M., 1989).

Andrew Coulson (1993) emphasised that the non-elected boards of UDCs have made tension and perhaps conflicts in their areas. On the other hand the regeneration policy based on the creation of UDCs is quite expensive. Although some short-term political goals have been acquired, the long-term objectives have not been achieved, i.e., many of the UDCs flagship projects are far from being signed and sealed (Coulson, 1993).

Some commentators emphasise the role of people in urban regeneration policy. For example, Dabinett and Ramsden (1993), through their investigation of the experience of UDCs in Sheffield, stress that the founding of UDCs more than any other urban policy, created among people the perception of their incapability to control and hence to improve their quality of lives. Rejecting the policy of UDCs, they suggest that an urban policy for people would be smaller in ambition, broader in scope and based on neighbourhood rather than city centre, involving and encouraging people and communities rather than simply seeking tokenist community representation to support transforming visions

Sue Brownill (1993), in her investigation of London Docklands Development Corporation, points out that the experience of UDCs showed that local needs and also local responses would be different. So, there could be no policy blueprint prescribed for

every area. She also stresses that the property development-led regeneration approach which seeks city revitalisation "can make an area a hostage to the fortunes of the property market as well as working to the detriment and exclusion of the locality" (Brownill, 1993, p. 55)

Jones (1995) studied the interaction between the process of provision of public sector financial aid to property developers and the operation of land markets. He pointed out that the projects undertaken during the 1980s brought about much more profits for the private sector than were expected (Jones, 1995).

Some recent evaluation policy research shows that job creation as the main objective of most UDC projects, has not been achieved adequately. For instance, the survey of Newcastle Business Park, one of major projects of Tyne and Wear Development Corporation, showed that most of the jobs were transferred to the Park from other parts of the region and a few from other parts of the country (Robinson, *et al*, 1993; Ghomashchi, 1993). The experience of Newcastle Business Park confirms that UDCs could not achieve the provision of employment and community facilities. As Robinson (1993) noted, its achievement in job creation was "disappointing" and "unimpressive". The focus on physical development alone is inadequate in relation to local people's needs. That means that successful regeneration can not be adequately defined in only physical development.

Many believe that urban regeneration requires a more expansive and broader vision and a more reasonable and logical blueprint for finance, employment and social provision more than just an agency which concentrates on physical development. In addition, it seems that UDCs could not generate employment and socio-economic improvement, as well as (and as a result of) physical regeneration. The UDCs' experiences have demonstrated that they were expensive schemes with a high cost-per job and minimal effectiveness on the quality of life in local areas by achieving maintained economic and environmental improvements (Parkinson, and Evans, 1989).

UDCs have created an attractive environment, and have constructed good quality stock, financing buildings with adequate transportation and modern communication system. But all of such physical developments are only parts of the UDC's objectives, in terms of urban regeneration.

### 3.2.3. Urban Regeneration and Housing Policies

For many urban scholars the "settlement" has a crucial role in human urban life. Some believe that inadequate housing conditions may lead to many other disadvantages in individuals' and households' capability to build their own quality life. They emphasise that housing condition is one of the most important reasons for social exclusion and a major obstacle to people's access to main-stream socio-economic activities. Such a dominant approach in the context of urban policy led to a strong emphasis on housing policies, in many countries, to tackle urban problems.

McGregor and McConnachie (1995), in their theoretical paper pointed out that living in the disadvantaged area has caused exclusion of local people with their isolation from the labour market and mainstream social and economic activities. They reviewed the policies tackling this problem at the neighbourhood level while emphasising that such a problem was rooted in the economic performance of cities, regions and nations. Thus, reconsidering the influences of wider macroeconomic potential is vital.

McGregor and McConnachie argued that, although housing policies can improve economic conditions and provide essential services in the area, local economic regeneration needed rather "multi-faceted" and broad approaches to be considered. They suggested a "multi-sectoral" approach as a solution for such complex urban problems. This approach focused on two main policies: 1) creating local job opportunities within the area; and 2) constituting linkages between *excluded areas* and the wider labour market. It has been clearly shown, through many investigations, that only a low percentage of jobs created in such areas have been taken up by local people (for instance, Robinson, 1994, Ghomashchi, 1994).

In contrast, some argue that housing policy by itself, can not tackle urban problems, in particular, social exclusion. Three important policies: physical rehabilitation of the area including housing improvement, training programmes and education of young were identified as the main common programmes for urban regeneration schemes (McGregor and McConnachie, 1995).

Due to insufficient knowledge of how people respond to the new programmes and policies, McGregor and McConnachie concluded that it was difficult to predict the process of neighbourhood change. It seems that they are concerned primarily with area regeneration rather than improving individuals' lives. They pointed out that individuals would leave the neighbourhood for better areas, after gaining skills and finding a job. And new people from more disadvantaged areas would come to the neighbourhood, and the picture of the neighbourhood did not change. They suggested three key points to achieve urban regeneration policy: investing in quality, involving local residents in the

process, and raising people's employment prospects and incomes (*ibid.*). While they emphasised the role of local people in urban regeneration, they did not clarify how local people can be involved in the process of such policies.

Cameron and Doling (1993) discussed what kinds of policies could help local people to gain access to economic opportunities and how far housing policies were important to achieve this objective. Their research examined two main questions: first, did physical and economic regeneration benefit excluded local residents? And, secondly, did such development attract low-income residents from other areas for a better life. Through their empirical work in two case-studies, the cities of Birmingham and Newcastle upon Tyne, they concluded there was a "lack of interaction" between the zones in the area where policy was initiated and the surrounding disadvantaged residential neighbourhoods. They believed that housing policies could protect the neighbourhood from the negative effects of gentrification, but these areas could not benefit from new employment opportunities.

They also evaluated the recent urban regeneration scheme, City Challenge, through this investigation. They suggested that most job opportunities through such urban policies benefited people from outside the targeted area. Finally, they recommended that although economic development and job creation were essential, it should not become an end in itself. Rather, they were tools to benefit local residents. To benefit local excluded people, they demonstrated, training and education, removing barriers to employment, job placement programmes, community business, living and working in an area and housing policies as a bridge to gain access to the economic mainstream and community empowerment should be considered.

Stuart Cameron (1992) examined the implication of housing policies in urban regeneration schemes. He discussed that due to privatisation policies and limiting the emphasis of the public sector by the British government, during the last decade, the disposition of urban policies has dramatically been changed. This change brought about the question of who benefited and who suffered from such policies, he argued. Cameron reviewed recent urban initiatives and housing policies and their outcomes in Tyneside, and in particular focused on Tyne & Wear Development Co-operation and its housing activities in that area. He pointed out that the "private sector would often only invest with the aid of large public subsidies". And, it was concluded that such urban housing policies did not significantly affect housing conditions and opportunities for low-income residents, "they are simply irrelevant" (Cameron, 1992).

Chris Wadhams (1993), examined the relationship between housing-related work policy and local economic regeneration, through five case studies in the US, EC and

India. He pointed out that housing policy concentrating locally might be capable of playing a key role in neighbourhood action. As an alternative to the third economic system, he believed that housing can co-exist with the traditional public sector and the dominant mixed market economy, providing suitable conditions for urban regeneration achievement.

So, it can be said that, in the case of *housing-led urban regeneration*, there was more emphasis on a *place-centred* rather than a *people-centred* focus. Although, housing has an important role in urban life, it is more a tool and a single aspect of quality of life, and it could not generate, by itself, a capacity in the society for urban regeneration.

### 3.2.4. Urban Regeneration and Cultural Policies

In the era of industrialisation and economic decline of cities, arts and cultural policies have been considered as key elements for urban regeneration in contemporary Europe and North America. There has been a rapid growth of urban cultural policies initiated by American scholars and policy makers and then followed by Europeans. Over the last decades, there has therefore been a remarkable investigation and evaluation studies in this context. Presuming similar function and purposes for “*arts*” and “*culture*” has led these terms to be used jointly or simultaneously by most social commentators.

Many social commentators considered the forms and application of cultural policies in urban regeneration policies. For them the target is economic development and culture is used as a “tool” for achievement.

The cultural initiatives during the Victorian period in the UK reflected particular concepts of arts, society, and the government role and particular patterns of urban development and interurban competition; and local patterns of class formation and political control. Recent cultural policies have focused upon a cultural infrastructure of museums, theatres and concert halls, some of which were the products of previous rounds of local cultural strategies in the 19th century (Basset, 1993).

Griffiths (1993) argued that development of cultural activities and art production could attract target customers, improve property values, provide legitimisation for urban development policies, and improve the relationships between economic and political elite. He believed that in addition to some showpiece projects like museums, galleries, theatres and concert halls, providing linkage sites of cultural and historic interest, through urban heritage conservation policies, which attracted new visitors,

could be addressed as cultural initiatives for urban revitalisation. He emphasised, in the context of cultural planning policies, developing “cultural industries” which supported the creation of subsidies for art studios for local people providing linkage between local artists and designers and local industrial firms (Griffiths, 1993).

Bassett (1993), through a Bristol case study, reviewed the broader context within emerged in urban cultural policies. He believed that the nature of recent urban cultural policies and their influences on the economic regeneration of the city became more complex than such policies in 1980s. He added that such strategies requires a combined consideration of “pre-existing cultural infrastructures, the nature of economic restructuring and changes in local class structures, ethnic and cultural diversity, local political control, and the degree of organisation of local business elite.” He concluded that linking between local cultural strategies and construction of a new, critical cultural discourse was essential, and perhaps that future cultural policies should be considered as “a site for class struggle rather than a site for alliance building”. In consequence it would become more political (Bassett, 1993). However, he did not mention that culture could become a key element of social cohesion in a society rather than the source of class conflict.

Culture is considered as a key point of this research, but from different point of view. As discussed, many commentators for instance Bassett (1993), focus on culture as an art and a “sector of production” in society, in contrast to the understanding of culture, in the present study, as a “way of thinking and acting which is based on systems of meaning and shared values in the society” (see Chapters 4 and 5).

### **3.2.5. Urban Regeneration and Community Development**

Indeed, since the second half of the 1960s, in most developed countries, in particular the USA and the UK, it has been recognised that involvement and participation of local residents of disadvantaged areas should be considered as an essential element of urban regeneration. This argument is based on the assumption that multiple deprivation and political powerlessness as the common characteristics of such impoverished areas would not be removed unless serious real participation of local residents in the processes of both decision making and designing programmes was considered.

Community development is a well-developed approach and an important strategy in many countries to tackle urban problems (Alterman, 1995).

The following three objectives are addressed by this approach:

- “-involving local people in identifying issues, needs and potential solutions;
  - enabling local people to take the initiative by helping them to develop skills, knowledge and confidence; and
  - empowering local people to gain a voice within decision-making and political systems”
- (McConnell, C., 1993, p 756)

After about thirty years of various public policy and urban initiatives in this context, some argue that unless the local communities are empowered to participate in such policies as a real effective partner in the processes of regeneration, the policy will be “misdirected” (McConnell, 1993).

While during the last decades, market-led urban regeneration policies concentrated upon property development rather than socio-economic development and community-based regeneration, most recent urban policy commentators believe that it is necessary to focus upon community development, in addition to education, employment, training and health policies. And the best way to achieve this objective is to convince people and prove to them that they have both the ability and the opportunity to influence their future effectively.

David Donnison (1993), outlined the problems of urban regeneration policies in the UK, and the fundamental reasons behind such problems. He argued that the economic changes, since the early 1970s, led to increasing numbers of excluded people and also expanding the gap between the upper and lower classes in the society. In the political context, governments keep the majorities (upper and middle classes) happy at the cost of those in the disadvantaged margins. He discussed that urban problems arose because most poor people had to live in particular areas. This again kept them away from mainstream socio - economic activities. He believes that progress at the local level is possible, but if we consider neither the national problems nor the growing numbers of excluded people, “we shall simply shift the problems around the map”(Donnison, 1993). Finally he concluded with six policies recommendation for the future: public-private partnership, involving local people, adopting a multi-agency approach to establish a joint collaborative presence in the area, operating simultaneously at different levels, considering providing job opportunities for people who are effectively out of the labour market, such as disabled and retired and finally, concerning people’s traditions, their history and their identity. While Donnison did not discuss the implications of such recommendations in detail, similarly, the present study aims to illustrate the role and influence of people’s cultural values and traditions in urban regeneration policy.

Geoff Fordham (1993) emphasised that any urban regeneration policy needs “improved co-ordination of public programmes, the promotion of sustainable development, involving the business community and the involvement of the local community”.

Considering community partnership in urban regeneration, McArthur (1993) argues that, although local communities involvement has been considered as a key element of urban regeneration initiatives in the 1990s, giving people a real effective role in decision making would not be easy. Towards effective community participation, he stressed that it would be important to identify residents’ attitudes and their role and their potential in participation. It is important, he argues, to involve communities in the first stages of strategy building to create a suitable sphere encouraging people to participate. He also believes that examining surveys of local residents and community groups can provide the basis of a process which gives the community a degree of ownership over what is done and how the results are used.

The integrated approach of community education and urban regeneration has been examined through a case study in pre-united Berlin, Germany by Angelica Kruger. Kruger (1993) looked at the key issues of community involvement and their active participation in the process of building their environment and their quality of life. She examined the integrated “multi-dimensional partnership” approach to community development in action. She found education and training as structural elements of regeneration led integrated approach to community development. The objectives of her community education approach were: empowerment, grass-root participation and action, cross-sector partnership, multiculturalism and community action.

John Armstrong (1993), reviewed the experience of community development in physical development schemes in the UK. He outlined nine political points for successful community involvement in development. They are: confidence to act, community development, multi-professional team approach, community education, technical aid, capacity building, community management, community benefit and community ownership and partnership. In conclusion, he pointed out that community development must become the “norm” rather than “exception”.

Obviously, there are other urban regeneration strategies that have been initiated in different cities in other countries, but the arguments and policies described above are probably the most in use. These urban policies present a wide variety of efforts, but each has shown itself in a specific area. The property development-led urban regeneration policy caused some physical development, but it improved neither social nor economic conditions of local residents’ lives. While this strategy, as a single narrow



activity, was supported by a huge amount of public finance, the benefits were mostly for private investors. Rather, it has been led to physical development rather than tackling urban problems and achieving urban regeneration objectives.

Although settlement plays a significant role in urban life, and unsuitable housing conditions could produce other incapability, the improvement of housing conditions can not resolve other urban problems such as unemployment and deprivation. However, housing policies are mostly concentrated on places rather than people. This means that the capacity of the physical environment to change people's lives are considered rather than people's capacity to build their environment. Moreover, such policies are largely subsidised by governments, while there is no guarantee to improve local people's lives.

Culture has mostly been used as a tool for economic development in urban regeneration strategies. Considering arts and urban heritage as culture may lead to the economic understanding of culture which uses culture as a sector of production. While such cultural policies are not focused on physical development and place-based orientation, only a small group of people as artists, service and entertainment sectors, not necessarily local people, are involved. The capacity of the majority of ordinary people may be ignored. Again, such policies can not guarantee to benefit local people and improve the condition of their lives. However, as noted, culture has a different meaning in the present study, which will be clarified in the later parts of research.

Perhaps, community development is the most appropriate strategy to achieve urban regeneration among others discussed above. The community development approach is a shift from economy, place and environment to people. In an ideal form it can also be defined as a shift from environmental capacity to social capacity for urban regeneration. The aims and objectives of community development are well-developed and also quite achievable. But a lack of a fundamental understanding of human needs and capacity together with an inadequate recognition of significant elements of urban life and their inter-relationships has led to the misdirection of policy.

While this approach considers people's traditions, their history and their identity, it does not identify their role and influence in urban strategies. While involving local people in decision-making processes is claimed as a rather good idea, little attention has been paid to develop the implication of this idea to achieve such an objective.

## Conclusion

In most countries around the world, poverty, unemployment, crime, and the destruction of the environment are examples of long-term structural urban problems. Many people are struggling with a developing process of marginalization and exclusion often leading to uncertainty and insecurity.

Bringing together several strands of literature concerned with the definition and explanation of urban decline and urban regeneration policy provides an introduction for representing an alternative approach to urban regeneration in this study. Obviously, some considerable schemes and urban policies have been achieved. There are places, in the older industrial cities across Europe and in the United States, where new jobs and new enterprises are to be found, where housing and the surrounding environment have been improved, where investors are now investing their own money in the area and starting up business. These are very significant achievements. But, in fact, these achievements, have rarely benefited the most excluded people, the people who have greatest difficulty in gaining their share of the advantages and opportunities which a growing urban economy should offer. More importantly, as the concern of this thesis, almost all such definitions of the problem and also policies prescribed have mostly concentrated on material aspects of urban life. The government and the material resources have been recognised as the most important driving forces of urban changes.

On the other hand, for some obvious reasons, after about thirty years since the first formal urban policy was initiated, "there has never been any likelihood of a concerted attack upon the causes of urban decline. Urban initiatives have therefore had a variety of simultaneous and often conflicting functions. They have reflected the needs of the government of the day and have deflected attention away from the root causes of urban problems" (Atkinson and Moor, 1994, p. 272).

Reviewing the literature shows that many commentators agree that urban problems are not unique to cities experiencing loss of population and employment. Rather such problems may cause new difficulties which affect other aspects of people's urban life. In other words, a number of economic, demographic, social, cultural and other factors contribute to urban change. But how these factors interact with each other has not been clarified yet and needs rather more consideration. For many, urban studies in terms of policy making and evaluation are mostly concerned with job creation, population changes, physical development and finally economic growth. Even in their cultural policies and community development strategies, the target is economic development. The meaning of "quality of life", in theory and practice, is often summarised in economic benefits and material advantages. In other words, the aim of

such policies has been focused on jobs for finance and prestige, accommodation for living and environment for pleasure. But, in most such concepts and debates, some important elements in people's lives have been ignored. It seems, the "tool" and the "target" have been misunderstood and in many cases misplaced. Urban regeneration has been identified as the target, while it should be used as a tool to achieve something much more important than people's material needs. Is there any other need rather than economic? What are other human needs, if any? What is the relationships between different human needs? And how to achieve such objectives?

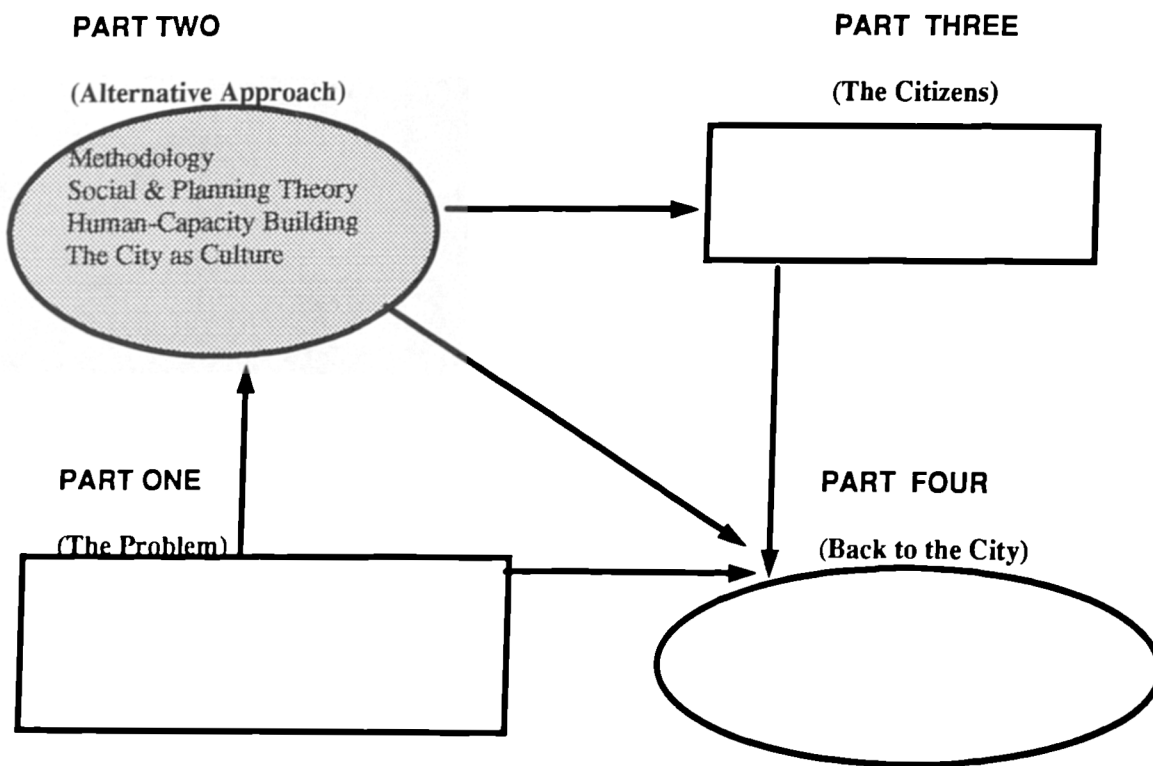
The experience of more than three decades of urban policies has shown that challenging urban decline in general, and tackling social exclusion and cultural deprivation in particular, needs integrated approaches and comprehensive strategies. This requires strategies which re-consider individuals, groups and communities, which are able to provide an adequate sphere for people in order to enable them to feel confidence and self-esteem to be involved in building their future effectively as active agents rather than victims of the developments and changes. Many analysts call for an integrated approach to urban regeneration, but do not discuss the nature of this integration. We argue that an integrated alternative approach to urban regeneration is needed which considers all aspects of human life, in social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. But the nature of this integration needs a careful consideration.

There are several lessons which can be learned from the literature, such as: looking at urban problems through a systemic view, economic analysis of urban problems, the importance of multi-industry in economic sustainability, multi-sector and multi-agency approach to urban regeneration and the importance of the people's role in the processes of rational decision-making. But, there are still some gaps which the present study attempts to fill. This research aims to develop an alternative integrated approach to urban regeneration through:

- emphasising human and social capacity rather than material resources
- highlighting local resources for endogenous development rather than exogenous forces,
- stressing culture as a basic element of social life and consequently cultural values as the driving force of social mobilisation
- clarifying the meaning of quality of life and its associated subjective elements

This alternative approach will be discussed in the next two chapters.

# PART 2



# 4

## **Human-Capacity Building in a Homogeneous Society**

### **Introduction**

In our present time, planning activities have found a significant role in most aspects of social life. But, for many, in the last decades, planning in both the contexts of theory and practice has not succeeded in incorporating and respecting simultaneous and contrasting representations of reality. For instance John Friedman (1987) emphasises:

“Talk to planners, and nine out of ten will describe their work as “failure” or of “little use”. They will say “... Our solutions don’t work. The problems are mountainous”... we are forced to conclude that mainstream planning is in crisis” (Friedman, 1987, p 311).

Some believe that the failure in planning achievement is a reflection of a deeper crisis in society and the way we see the world. They consider such a failure as a reflection of theoretical and philosophical understanding and approaches to planning. (Harper and Stein, 1996). They emphasise that philosophy and methodology play a significant role in building planning, in theory and practice. Philosophy encourages us to reflect deeply, also philosophy-based methodology helps in thinking and evaluating.

In this concern, closing the theory-practice gap in the context of planning has been discussed in a great number of texts in planning literature. Most debates in this concern focused on the nature of the relationship between theory and practice, how to make

links between them, and how they affect each other (Fischer, 1980; DeNeufville, 1983; Forester, 1993)

In the last two chapters this research attempted to illustrate the nature and scope of urban problems of the case study area as well as reviewing most dominant approaches to analysing and tackling urban decline in theory and practice. Considering and evaluating such policies needs deep understanding of planning theory and practice as well as the philosophical and social debates behind them.

This part of the research attempts to explore the relationship between planning, social theory and philosophy leading to an alternative approach to planning towards responding to urban life based on a philosophical and sociological understanding of the individual, society and human life. This is being done to clarify the meaning of the urban regeneration and quality of life proposed in this thesis, as well as the way to achieve it. This discussion will be used as the foundations of an alternative approach to urban regeneration, in theory and practice.

This chapter consists of six main sections. The first Section reviews the literature related to the history and background of planning thoughts, followed by philosophy and social theory discussion in section Two. Section Three develops a methodological approach to this research. Section Four investigates the dominant sociological debates in the context of the research. In Section Five the most appropriate planning debates based on meaning of culture, cultural diversity and communication theories will be discussed. And, finally the “human-capacity building” approach will be developed in section Six.

#### **4.1 The History of Planning Thoughts**

Planning has drawn on a variety of thoughts and disciplines in the context of theory and practice, since the last century. Planning has also been defined as the 20th century response to the 19th century industrial city (Peter Hall, 1988).

The history of planning has been characterised by three basic eras: 1) the formative years during which the pioneers had no idea about themselves as planners, such as Burnham (late 1800s and early 1900s); 2) the period of institutionalisation, professionalisation, and self-recognition of planning, together with the rise of regional and federal planning efforts (1910-1945); and 3) the post-war era of standardisation, crisis, and diversification of planning (Krueckeberg, 1983).

Between 1890 and 1930, it was attempted to devise an ideal city for the twentieth century, a city to illustrate the power and beauty of modern technology together with the notion of social justice. Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier were the most famous influences on urban designers of that era. They believed that reforming the physical environment can improve the total life of a society (Fishman, 1977).

The *City Beautiful* movement was represented in Burnham's plan of Chicago, in 1909. The city beautiful approach was basically another physical approach to an urban political reform movement. It was an attempt to set up a good environment for an ideal community and the potential for good in all citizens (Wilson, 1989).

In fact, traditional planning concentrated on the physical structure of the city and built environment, and dealt with practice rather than theory. There were mostly architects or reformers with ideas about how the city should be built and formed. In fact they sought to treat people to fit into their buildings cities, i.e., *people for places* rather than *places for people*. Instead, this research aims to focus on a people-centred approach to planning.

After World War II, theory came to play a new role in the new planning era. The modern theoretical paradigms in planning however, emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. They were initially based on the idea of: a comprehensive, rational model of problem-solving to guide government in making decisions and solve problems.

Modernist planning, as utilitarian understanding, found itself within both a European rationalism and American pragmatism (Beauregard, 1989). The "spatial paradigm" of modernist planning was concentrated on "the production of standard commodities for large markets, the importance of transportation infrastructure for the circulation of commodities, and the location of investment in proximity to labour" (ibid.). This modern concept of planning is based on the ideas of democracy and progress. Modern planning has been presented as a progressive force for economic and social development in a world where democracy and capitalism coexisted in acceptable consensus (Healey, 1992b). Democratic planning, in the late 1960s, was presented as a response to accusing traditional planners of imposing their vision of the world on people. Friedmann (1987) emphasised a new role for planning as struggle for a recovery of the political community on which Western ideas of democratic governance are based. Democratic planners concentrated on planning for disadvantaged groups, in order to privilege people economically or politically excluded in society.

Advocacy planning along with democratic planning was originally described by Paul Davidoff (1965). Advocate planners considered public participation or client groups to determine substantive goals and explicitly accept planning as a political rather than a strictly scientific activity. Advocacy planning, was defined as a new idea in urban change that sought greater representation of people, in particular excluded people, in governmental policy making process (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1996). The idea of Davidoff's advocacy planning was rooted in a political view of city development, with liberal and conservative plans in order to support the private market through greater governmental control (Davidoff, 1965).

A systems view was one of the most scientific approach to planning in this era. Brian McLoughlin (1969) and George Chadwick (1971) have made a great contribution in developing this approach. They considered the nature of Man, his ecology and physical change through a systemic way. They emphasised the power of a systems view in *explaining and understanding human relationships with the environment, and the ways in controlling such relationships through the mechanism of development control* (McLoughlin, 1969 pp. 100-1). In a similar way, Chadwick (1971) emphasised on the role of values in goals formulation and summarised the principal features of a systemic rational decision making as: defining goals and objectives, considering alternatives, identifying outcomes and selecting the most preferable alternative.

Strategic planning is based on instrumental rationality and regional economic development. It is also built on modelling the dynamics of urban systems and managing them with strategic development through the "comprehensive rational planning process". Rapid changes and growth were essentially considered to make an effective plan to manage uncertain future. Strategic planning tried to offer crucial opportunities to public planners to play significant roles in strategic projects at the community level (Kaufman and Harvey, 1987).

The most effective concepts, in this context, were based on Keynes' economic theory that emphasises the stimulation of demand as the essential solution for more production and economic growth. According to this idea, if people have insufficient resources to spend, then production will decline. The emergence of welfare states in Europe and US to help people to achieve education, to maintain health and to get housing, was a response to the inadequacies of the economic system. Whilst this concept was supported by different economic and political assumptions, they mostly concentrated on material well-being and standardisation of life, and maximising individual preferences (in capitalist countries).



For many later commentators, the modern concepts in social science, in particular in planning policy, came to be seen as models of “utility-maximising individuals, a narrow and cold rationalism, and competitive or hierarchical organisation” (Healey, 1997, p.41). They believed that modernity was a rational project, with significant political consequences, organising how people thought and acted, and what they wished and wanted. In fact, most conceptual and empirical approaches to urban problems and the policies for tackling them, studied in Chapter 3, were based on modern rational understanding of planning in theory and practice.

Economic, environmental, social and political pressures in the 1990s encouraged the emergence of a new integrated approach to planning. Post-modern scholars have opened new conceptual debates criticising modern planning through a large number of questions. For example, how to represent “planning” without “standard” conceptions of systems and structure, based on scientific knowledge? How can decisions be made without standard “rational” procedures? (Healey, 1992). The concept of cultural diversity and communication are considered as the foundations of post-modern social approaches. These new ideas contrast with the rationalist view with its belief that individuals, in their extreme position, as autonomous subjects challenge the object world. They allocate their resources according to their understanding of the world and their preferences.

Communicative planning theory has been presented as a well-known alternative concept in the post-modern era. It is based on the idea of “living together but differently”. This idea targets a strategic consensus-building process through understanding each other via a normative communication (in a network of relations) in order to learn how to co-exist in shared spaces. Planning in this approach is defined as: an interactive and interpretative process, considering cultural diversity within societies, searching for and admiring values. This approach “presents strategic spatial planning as a process of facilitating community collaboration in the construction of discourse, in strategic consensus building” (Healey, 1996a, p.224).

Reviewing the history of planning thoughts in the last century illustrates both its development to deal with people’s life and, perhaps its deficiency to achieve its aims as a social science. It seems, in the last 100 years that planning has made considerable efforts, in both theory and practice, to understand, analyse and resolve urban problems, to manage physical development and economic growth and to achieve quality of life as well as sense of well-being. But, in this process less consideration has been paid to people, as human beings, their needs and their capacity to change the environment.

Obviously, the familiar questions of “what is the quality of life” and “which system is good for human beings and provides them with a happy social life?”, arise when mankind began to improve his social life. Indeed, these questions are deeply rooted in the question of the priority of the individual or society. The problem of making harmony between those two essential parts of human life has driven humanity into a long struggle in the ideological and political fields, and into different kinds of conflicts. The various intellectual doctrines seek to establish and construct this social conflict, as well as to formulate its designs and to pose its principles. This suggest that we need a new basic concept to answer all such questions. In this concern, as the initial step of thinking, two key element should be considered, the first is the method of thinking and knowing and the second is the notion of the world.

As noted, the role of philosophy and methodology in the processes of thinking and acting is rather considerable. The present author’s view is that having a certain philosophical understanding of the world together with a clear interpretation of the role and position of planning and planner in such a world can assist planner and policy maker to think deeply and act sensitively. In this concern, elaborating the philosophical debates in the context of social science helps us to present our alternative approach more precisely.

## 4.2 Philosophy and Social Science

For many years, the role of philosophy in the emergence and development of social science has been discussed by many social scientists. Most traditional and modern concepts in this regard emphasise that science investigates the nature, cause and effects, and the process of changes in observable phenomenon. While philosophy is concerned with the nature of unobservable notions together with understanding general subjective rules and principles beyond objective facts, i.e.; with “how we should act”. Furthermore, some believe that the philosophy of science, art, politics, etc., lose their philosophical character if unrelated to epistemology and metaphysics (Winch, 1975).

Generally, philosophy can be related in three ways to social science. First, philosophy assists investigators to have a clear picture of the *world* and *being*; i.e., “*Ontology*” helps the understanding and analysing of many dilemmas and contradictions in their minds, such as human nature and the origin and destination of the world. Second, basic knowledge as well as the process of knowing are based on philosophy; i.e., “*Epistemology*” helps the researcher to identify certain methodologies for investigation in a social context. Third, philosophy clarifies the basic universal rules and

principles linking general concepts in concern with human social life, “*Social theory*” (HUCO, 1994).

Most philosophical debates, especially in modern philosophy, focus on human knowledge. Knowledge is the starting point of philosophical discussions towards establishing a solid philosophy of the universe and the world. Questions such as: how did human beings come to know? How was their intellectual life formed? And what is the primary source that provides them with the stream of thoughts and knowledge?; are the most dominant in this context.

Further, the concern of philosophy, in the context of social science, is with the question “what is involved in having knowledge’ of facts, and what is the general nature of behaviour which is decided on in accordance with such knowledge? It is also important to note that man should be sufficiently aware of the facts of his situation, the world surrounding him and his relationship to those around him. All these issues depend on his recognition and interpretation of the whole world, life as well as the way of reasoning and understanding. How is such an understanding possible? What is the process of knowing and what is the role of human interests and values in knowledge and interpretation which are considered in this research? It might be useful to emphasise that we need to know this since “understanding” influences “policy”, and policy influences “action”.

#### **4.2.1 Knowledge, Value and Evaluation**

The notion of “values” is a key subject in terms of “knowledge” and “evaluation”. A considerable attention has been paid in terms of values by scientists, in particular social investigators. It leads to obvious distinctions among social scientists and their methodologies.

“Values” are defined as general guidelines in human life. A value is also defined as a belief that something is good or bad. It usually certifies what is important and worthwhile. Values direct individuals’ behaviour and action, towards what should be or should not be done (Allport, 1963; Jones and Gerard 1967; Rokeach, 1973).

Many believe that science is separate from ethics and knowledge is separate from values. To clarify the role and relations between values and science, Max Weber pointed out that science and politics are separate matters. The scientist could not play the politician’s role and vice versa. The politician’s task is to announce, explain and defend his ideas and its related values, while a scientist’s duty is only analysing the facts, no

more (Weber, 1949). Furthermore, some believe that a scientist does not consider his own values in his investigation.

By contrast, for many, facts and values are both together. Perhaps some knowledge, in its origin, is neither dependent on nor combined with values, but in practice and application values appear and influence the facts. Through this research we consider that fact as “what is” and value as “what should be” are not separable. They are substantial parts of human nature which always influence each other. Thus, in the context of science, in particular social science, considering one of them in the absence of the other is an obvious fault. Indeed, most concepts in terms of urban decline and regeneration, which have been reviewed in Chapter 3, have had no paid adequate attention to people’s values, but have focused on facts.

Some social scientists like Weber (1949) believe that the first aim of science is only acquiring knowledge and transferring (educating) it. In contrast, some social commentators argue, the main target of science is trying to change social regimes in the world directly, and also changing the destiny of human societies. In this respect, an important question is raised as to whether and to what extent personal evaluation and judgement are acceptable, particularly in social science and its methodologies?

Indeed, separating individual values from rational and experimental knowledge is a rather difficult task, and perhaps impossible in social science, even for the most intelligent and just scientists. According to Popper (1972), evaluation is a major part of human life, if we take it away from a scientist, it means we take away his humanity. When we read a sentence of a book and recognise it as false or true, rational or irrational, that is a kind of evaluating. Further, whether we believe “evaluation” is acceptable or not is itself a kind of evaluation. Thus, we cannot generally escape our personal values and their effects on our perceptions of external facts and rational judgements. Some positivists reject all social and moral values and their importance in social science. They define values as a neutral, impartial and meaningless notion because of its impracticability. These debates have been elaborated in modern and post-modern western philosophy.

Habermas, the well-known German philosopher, has made a great contribution to elaborating the relation between knowledge and values. Habermas’ ideas have been employed as the foundation of many concepts and theories in recent literature in social science. Habermas (1972), in his valuable work *Knowledge and Human Interests*, has well developed the question of knowledge, its sources and values. He argues that human knowledge can be categorised as: “information that expands our power of technical control; interpretations that make possible the orientation of action within a common

tradition; and analyses that free consciousness from its dependence on hypothesised powers” (p. 89). In other words human interests influence and determine the nature and direction of human knowledge in three ways.

As Habermas claims, the first kind of human interest is “technical control and prediction”. At this level, the human being is going to predict the hidden facts in order to control the world (generally as a phenomenon outside of him). Access to the fact is provided by observation and the suitable knowledge for such a purpose is empirical-analysis. Natural science and positivism are the results of such a knowledge. The method for this knowledge is experimental and the connection between scientist and science, at this level, is based on a “subject-object” relationship. That means on one hand, a rational, conscious phenomenon and on the other hand a unconscious object are confronting each other. This concept and level of knowledge may be embedded in modern rational planning. The planner considers the environment and people as objects; providing technical information and presenting technical solutions to control the future and the environment.

The second level of human interests, as Habermas believes, is related to our “understanding”. In this level our purpose of investigation and exploration is only knowing and understanding. In this case, access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation. Hermeneutic methodology as a method of employing all techniques and knowledge for better understanding of others’ thoughts, has been applied at this level of interests. In this situation the confrontation is “subject-subject”. In this kind of understanding, control and prediction have been put away. This level is the context of “thoughts” confrontation. In hermeneutic methodology, in contrast with the first level, confirmation and refutation are not considered to evaluate the theory with the real world. Rather, what is important in this context, is “consensus” and “shared understanding”. Also, the shared understanding and common system of meanings between the members of society has a crucial role in social relations and unity. The importance of this will be emphasised in the later parts of this thesis (see Chapter 5).

Habermas stressed that hermeneutic knowledge is always moderated through an actor’s pre-understanding, which is derived from the interpreter’s initial situation. Such an understanding of meaning is directed toward the fulfilment of possible consensus among the actors in the framework of a self-understanding derived from tradition. This is called the *practical* cognitive interest, in contrast to the technical. It means, if we can find a consensus among actors who have studied the text, then we can claim that we understand the text in a right way. In this concept society has been considered as a text.

We should “understand” the society more than control and predict it. This is the notion we attempt to employ in the present study through developing ideas towards an alternative approach to urban regeneration.

Habermas claims, in the third level of interests we can realise “emancipation”. In this level, the subject confronts with itself, i.e., “inter subjectivity”. In this level the method is dialectic and critical. There is no method for confirmation and refutation but the “subject” itself. Here, knowledge combines with value. Critical theory was born by this concept of human interest and understanding methodology.

The role of values in turn, explains these three level of interests. Habermas argues that if control and prediction is a value, then the methods are experimental-analytic. If value is referred to understanding, the method is hermeneutic. And if value is related to emancipation then we have critical theory. For each of these three methods, Habermas specified a particular source for evaluating, confirmation or refutation. In the first method, the criteria is the outside world and reliability of the knowledge. In the second, the criteria is consensus of scientists and in the third method, the criteria is the subject by itself which is expected to be emancipated (Habermas, 1987).

It should be noted that, in the process of “understanding” values, communication with people plays a key role. On the one hand, understanding people’s needs and wishes is essential for understanding the existing facts within the society. On the other hand, exploring values would not be achieved unless there is communication with people and understanding of their ideas and attitudes. In this way, the methodology of investigation to understand plays a significant role in research. In other words such a particular concept needs a particular methodology.

### **4.3 The Methodological Approach**

As already noted, elaborating an integrated methodology for social investigation initially requires an answer to the questions of “*being and the world*”, “*nature, source and value of knowledge*” and “*the way of knowing*”. In this section, the research attempts to develop a systemic philosophical approach as a methodological part of this research as well as a basis for later discussion of culture and planning.

#### **4.3.1 Ontology: The Concept of "Unity of Being"**

To develop the methodological approach for this thesis, presenting a clear picture of the world together with a set of general theories considering the subject of the

universe, life, society and mankind are required. We shall present, here, one of the most comprehensive and complex theories in this context as a foundation of the alternative approach to planning.

The "*Unity of Being*" as a famous Islamic-philosophical concept was originally presented by Sadr al-Din Shirazi (called Mulla Sadra), a well known Iranian philosopher, in the Eleventh Century. He believed that the whole universe has a unitary existence coming from a certain place and moving to a certain destination. Every thing in the world is a part of such a unified being and there is a strong harmony among all parts of the universe. This doctrine does not claim that there is a substantial continuity between the creature and the world, or any form of pantheism or monism; rather, it claims that there cannot be two orders of reality independent of each other (Nasr, 1981). Mulla Sadra believed that:

"all contingent beings lie in a hierarchy stretching from prime matter to Being Itself and are united to Being like so many concentric circles echoing their common centre. Each being is unified to the centre as all numbers connected to unity without being derived from each other. ... Likewise all things are united by their existence which is reflection of Being and separated by their own particularity. ... On the one hand Being is above the manifested order and nothing is outside it and, on the other, all positive qualities return to it and are derived from it" ( Quoted by Nasr, 1981, pp 184-185)

Sayed Kotb (1980) developed this approach well in the context of man and society. He believed that the Universe is a unified phenomenon. Man is himself part of the world, in relation to and dependent upon all other parts of the world. In particular, individuals are dependent upon and related to each other and their society too. Humanity is therefore, a vital unity. Accordingly, we can expect the same comprehensive unity, when we consider human individuals and social life as a culture. He stresses that although societies' culture and individuals' capabilities are so diverse in appearance, they could be essentially united for a purpose. He emphasised a unity for all desires and preferences leading to coherent efforts in human life (Kotb, 1980).

Reconciling the individualism and collectivism concepts is perhaps the main task of contemporary social research in the challenge for public life. A comprehensive definition of society, understanding cultural identity with recognition of different individuals' nature, behaviour and interests also assists us to construct such an approach. In the later stage of developing the conceptual part of study, the interaction between individual and society as well as the role of culture in the society are considered.

### 4.3.2 Epistemology: Theological Hermeneutic Realism

In considering the primary source of human conception, *Rational Theory* claims that there are two sources of conceptions. One of them is sense perception, and the other is the innate nature. This is to say that human mind possesses ideas and conceptions that are not derived from the senses, but are fixed in the innermost being of the innate nature. The *Empirical Theory* states that only sense perception supplies the human mind with conceptions and ideas, and the mental power is that which reflects in the mind in various sense perceptions (As-Sadr 1987).

As-Sadr (1987), a great Muslim philosopher, in his *Dispossession Theory*, divides knowledge, in general, into two kinds of ‘*Conception*’ and ‘*Assent*’. Conception is produced from the direct sense perception of their content. For instance, we conceive heat because we had known it via touch. It could be simple knowledge, for instance our perception of heat, light or sound; or composite like the idea of ‘mountain of gold’. Conception has no objective value, because it is only the presence of a thing in the abilities of our intellect.

Assent is knowledge involving a judgement, such as the heat derived from the sun. Assent is the only thing that has the quality of essentially disclosing objective reality (of conception). Such new ideas fall outside the scope of the senses, even though they are derived and extracted from the ideas that are given to the mind and to the thought by senses. The notions of cause and effects, substance and accident, existence and unity come about in the human mind, in light of this theory (As Sadr, 1987).

As-Sadr emphasises that all assent knowledge is the result of thinking processes based on primary true knowledge, whose necessity cannot be proved and whose truth cannot be demonstrated. However, the mind accepts its necessity and believes its truth. The principle of non-contradiction and the principle of causality are examples of such primary necessary knowledge. All other knowledge and assents are made upon such principles. The more careful the mind is in applying and directing such principles, the further away it is from making mistakes. Indeed, the value of knowledge depends on the extent of compatibility with the primary principles. Identification and application of the primary principles in natural science are based on experimentation, and since experimentation is not always efficient and true, thus the assent knowledge which is based on experimentation principles is not certain. On the other hand, in metaphysics and mathematics, applications may not need external experimentation, therefore, primary knowledge can provide true knowledge in metaphysics and mathematics (As-Sadr, 1987).



Therefore, it may be said that there is no knowledge and science which is *only* based on experiment, because knowledge is the product of reasoning, and in the process of reasoning we do inevitably use some innate knowledge which has not been derived from experiments or sense. Accordingly, as the first basis of the methodology employed in this study, we distinguish between natural science and social science and their associated methods for investigation; i.e., the two methods are not the same. So we consider both subjective and objective notions in our investigations.

To clarify the notions of objective and subjective, As-Sadr suggests that the specific form of realism consists of both objective and subjective notion of the world. He claims that:

"the mental concept that we form about a specific objective reality is two-sided. One side is the thing and its certain existence in our mind. Due to this, the thing must be presented in it; otherwise, it would not be a form of that thing. However, in another respect, it is fundamentally different from the objective reality. The reason for this is that it does not have the properties of the objective reality of that thing,....The mental concept that we form about matter, the sun or heat cannot,...., perform the same effective role played by the external objective reality of the mental concept. With this, we are able to determine the objective side of the ideas as well as the subjective side; that is the side drawn from the objective reality and the side that is attributed to the private mental formation. Thus, the idea is objective inasmuch as the thing is presented in it mentally. But due to the subjective management, the thing represented mentally in the form loses all the effectiveness and activity that it enjoyed in the external world" (As-Sadr, 1987, pp. 115-6).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that sensual knowledge is not deep enough, instead it is weak and superficial and depends on "time", "space" and "material". Such understanding is relatively common between human and animals. Sensual knowledge considers merely appearance and external conducts of phenomena. It cannot investigate and understand the nature of the fact and causal relations. From this debate, the following points may be drawn:

"Knowledge" is a result of investigation for the "Truth". The truth is a notion of fundamental, invariable and permanent absolute rules, facts or values. For example: "the Earth turns around the Sun" is a true fact, (although early generations did not believe this because of their limitations to their capacity to understand the truth) or "justice is good" and "crime is bad" are true values. They neither depend upon our knowledge and perception nor change through the time or space. Truth is not relative, what is relative is our knowledge and (or) our perception of the "truth". We never can understand the whole truth. Because as human beings, we cannot cross all obstacles such as *time* and *space* which are surrounding the material nature of human beings. It should be

emphasised that this concept is rather different from the post-modern relativism approach which emphasises that every thing is *relative*.

Having a clear idea of the nature and sources of knowledge, two major questions arise as what do we need to know, (and how)? And how should we use what we know? The first is the question of facts and the real world, whilst the second one is concerned with ethics and preferences; as well as values and moral obligations.

In the context of a scientific research, the term *empirical* refers to the methods and ways of dealing with what we need to know (and how); the term *normative* refers to the ways which deal with how we should use our knowledge. In fact normative analysis is concerned with developing and examining subjective goals, values, and moral rules to guide us in applying what we have learned of that reality (Manheim *et al*, 1986).

The normative analysis in the absence of an empirical foundation may lead to value judgements which are not reliable and applicable in reality. On the other hand, empirical analysis without a consideration of values can lead to the creation of a fact structure in a vacuum, a collection of observation and information which can not understand the reality fully.

Thus, to maximise not only our knowledge but also our understanding of social reality, we require a methodology which is based on the combination of values and facts; i.e., this thesis is built upon a combination of empirical and normative analysis.

From such a definition of human knowledge, its source and its value, we now move to clarify the notion of the world. The general philosophical approaches to the world can be categorised in three main ideas. The first is idealism, the second is materialist realism and the third is theological realism. In this concern, As-Sadr attempts to clarify the difference between those three ideas that have been reduced to the two ideas of materialism and idealism by western philosophers.

As-Sadr claims that the world is neither a pure conceptual notion, as idealists believe, nor a pure materialistic notion, as Marxists claim. He accepts the reality of the world independent to "I". Also, he argues that realism is not limited to the materialistic notion. His theological realism accepts an external reality of the world and nature. The theological realism of the world does not mean dispensing with natural causes or rebelling against any one of the scientific truths. Rather, it is informed by the notion that considers God as a cause beyond nature. In order to distinguish theological realism and idealism, As-Sadr points out that "spiritualism" is a theological method of comprehending reality as a whole, and not as a specific notion opposite the material

notion. "... the theology that asserts a supernatural, immaterial cause also asserts a link between all that exists in the general realm, be that spiritual or material, and the supernatural cause... this link is one in whose light the human practical and social position regarding all things must be determined" (As-Sadr, 1987, pp. 151-2).

Overall, the methodology followed in the present research might be termed "*Theological, Hermeneutic Realism*". It means we are realists, because we accept the reality of the world surrounding us, and try to explore the hidden facts and develop our knowledge sufficiently. We experience reality and also analyse it in accordance with primary essential rational rules and principles. At the same time, we may be termed theologists, because we believe that the world has been created intentionally by a superpower, not created accidentally. We employ hermeneutic method because we are studying subjective notions, such as values and attitudes, as the key element of this research. Thus, we need to know how to understand subjective matters and how can we share our understanding with others, through communication in a normative manner. For this reason a hermeneutic approach is recognised as the most efficient method of dealing with our purpose.

This investigation is generally concerned with social policy science. Such a concern deals with human beings in two ways, because both the people for whom the policy is made and the policy makers are human beings. Furthermore, the concept of the individual and (or) society is a significant debate in this context. Thus, we need to clarify the notions of human, society, and individual as well as their role and interaction in social life.

#### **4.4 Social Theory**

Clarifying the nature of man and human society together with social relations among individuals and societies leads to identifying other crucial elements of social life. In this context, social theoreticians have made great contribution for more than a century. We shall therefore try to show the influences of dominant contemporary social theories upon planning policies. Subsequently, our alternative approach will be built upon the notions of human capacity, human society, and the role of culture in constructing the relations between individuals and society.

The dominant social theories in the context of individual, society, and their interaction in social life can be divided into two groups following the basic traditional question of *Choice* or *Constraint*.

On the one hand, with some differences, Marxism, structuralism and functionalism emphasise the constructive role of the society in shaping individuals' behaviour and action. They stress that the human being is programmed and directed and controlled by his social system which he lives in. In terms of social policy, they believed that we should start from the society and build a desirable social system. The individuals will be influenced by such a system and also will be formed as the system wishes. It means that the individual is the product of the social system.

These perspectives brought about a set of public policy initiatives in the early 20th century which gave a substantial role to governments and policy makers to build the proposed social systems, for people as passive agents. In the extreme form, such concepts led to the emergence of public planning in the communist nations.

On the other hand, some sociological approaches, such as, phenomenological and utilitarian perspectives, believe that human action and behaviour depend on individual's characteristics and personal tastes. They claim that man actively constructs his own social world rather than being shaped by a social system which is somehow external to his being (Walsh, 1972). So, an individual is an autonomous being who can do every thing he wants, his target is maximising his preferences. This idea for a long time has been the base of rational policy-making in modern period. That has led to the emergence of the model of a utility-maximising individual, a narrow and 'cold' rationalism and a competitive organisation (Young, 1990, Healey, 1997).

The individualism concept, in recent years, has been transformed in social and philosophical literature as post-modernism. The post-modern commentators mostly emphasise the celebration of differences between individuals including their culture, their lifestyles, their needs and their opinions. The post-modern individualism encourages a perspective far away from public life and shared co-existence to the supreme individualism with isolated autonomy (Giddens, 1984, 1990, Moore and Milroy, 1991).

The traditional argument of *choice* or *determination* has been well developed through a sociological concept by Antony Giddens, the famous British sociologist. Giddens' *Structuration* theory, in fact, is an attempt to reconcile the two perspectives, between man and society, between individual and social system and between personal preferences and social interest.

He stresses that structure is the unintentional consequence of action. He believes that society is not a pre-given objective reality but is created by the action of individuals. Individuals are not free to choose how to create society but are limited by specifications of their original position which they do not choose. He believes structures are built

through action and action is constituted structurally. He identifies meanings, norms and power as the three aspects of any human action. In structuration theory 'structure' is considered as "rules and recursively implicated in social production; institutionalised features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilised across time and space" (Giddens, 1984).

The theory of structuration is similar to the Islamic idea that man is neither completely free in his action nor fully constrained and controlled by the rules and principles of the society within which he lives. Rather, although many rules and principles are stable and permanent, such as natural rules, man can change some of the conditions and generate new circumstances which follow new principles. That means, on the one hand that man is controlled by the existing system and rules, and on the other hand he can influence the system when he starts to change the existing conditions and cause a new situation. Of course, in such an interaction, man has already been influenced by his social system before becoming an active agency (Motahary, 1972).

So, the methodological approach of this research gives equal weight to society and individual to build the social system and also the environment. We should consider people as active agency as well as members of the society with shared values termed culture. This concept will be elaborated in the later parts of the study.

Culture along with the discussion of values has found its significant position in this research. Cultural debates, therefore, have appeared in the body of western literature as parts of sociological research. The present study is also focused on culture and its significance in human social life.

## 4.5 Culture

"Culture" has been defined by social scientists in various contexts and contents. The meaning of the term culture is, therefore very variable. Tylor (1958) defined culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits produced by individuals as members of the society. Linton referred to culture as the way of the members of a society; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit (Linton, 1945). Kluckhohn looked at the culture as a "design for living" held by members of a society. They believe that human actions should be built upon guidelines which are learned. In order to operate effectively, such guidelines should be shared by the members of society. Without a shared culture, members of society would be unable to communicate and co-operation. Culture therefore, has two essential specifications: firstly it is learned, secondly it is

shared. The existence of culture for any human society is therefore inevitable. (Kluckhohn, 1951).

From the point of views of critical structuralists and Marxists, culture has an ideological function, that is, it encourages or discourages people to accept situations which are basically against their interests (Waters, 1996).

Structural-functionalists consider culture as a systemic reality which can explain social structure and individual behaviour, but they consider actors as passive recipients of ideas. Marx looked at culture through a structuralist and materialist position. He stressed that cultural ideas were viewed as the product of economic relationships (ibid.). By contrast, Weber through his famous book, *'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'* showed that economic structures are the consequence of human ideas. Weber also emphasised that cultural systems have their own logical evolution and are independent of other development (Waters, 1996).

For Neo-Marxists, post-modern culture is the legitimating ideology for a new phase of capitalism, while for other postmodernists, culture breaks free from society to become autonomous and effective, in a new level (ibid.).

According to the institutional concept, culture is "systems of meanings and frames of references through which people in social situations shape their institutional practices" (Healey, 1997). However, we can understand culture as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which dominates any society in various forms and functions. We wish to make this point clearer in later parts of this thesis (see section 4.6.1).

In this respect, cultural diversity around us shows different ways of acting and lifestyles. The different systems of meaning and the differences between us and others could also be understood through such a cultural variety. But, the question arises, to what extent such a cultural diversity is meaningful and acceptable? Postmodernism encourages extreme individual positions and claims that we can isolate ourselves from others and create our own culture around us (Healey, 1997).

In such a post-modern society with a wide range of cultural diversity, how can we begin to understand each other, or how do we think about our relations with others and of co-existence in shared spaces. Even if we can reject the extreme post-modern idea, the question of "to what extent such a cultural diversity is acceptable" still remains.

With this concern, the famous post-modern expression of "we can live together differently" means we can have, as we have, different cultures and various systems of meanings while we live in a shared space. Considering culture with such a significant

role, opens a new debate in cultural diversity and the role of communication in this context. Through this debate we are going to understand the meaning and the scope of cultural diversity and compare the situation in the case study area to identify whether these people's culture is diverse or not. And which social policy is appropriate to be pursued in such an area?

#### **4.5.1 Cultural Diversity, Communication and Planning**

One of the serious debates in the area of culture is the cultural interaction between individuals and various levels of society such as family, school, firm, nation and so on. Giddens emphasises the concept of active agency and Habermas focuses on the processes of communicative understanding. Both of them emphasise cultural diversity and also cultural changes. The question is how can we establish stable and powerful relations, or system of meanings, through a rather diverse culture society? Habermas, in his communicative action theory, emphasises communication as the way to achieve consensus and shared values in society. He addresses four essential key conditions which should be considered in our communication to have a normative judgement. They are: comprehensibility, sincerity, legitimacy and truth (Habermas, 1984). It is obvious that all these elements have their own normative meanings and positions in societies.

The next question is how could we communicate to each other in a normative manner if we had different perceptions of the same notion, for example being sincere? How and who can guarantee the desirability and achievement of such a normative communication based on some certain moral values. What is the criteria to judge people's various attitudes towards the same thing, who is right and who is wrong?

The Institutional approach is developing attempts to solve the dilemma of social life through reconciling diversity and consensus, also individual preferences and public interests. Healey (1997) suggests a way forward is firstly to understand the cultural differences of people and secondly to attempt to create a new additional "layer" of cultural formation through making new cultural conceptions and shared systems of meaning and ways of acting. This concept emphasises that we need some shared values and common systems of meaning for a desirable co-existence. But who can guarantee the formation of such a new cultural layer? If such a layer is formed, based on the similarities and common meanings between all different cultures in the society, then how deep will it be and how also sustainable? Can we refer it as culture?

The concept of "*Collaborative Planning*", derived from the theories of structuration and communication action, has recently emerged as a response to cultural understanding of social life in urban context. Patsy Healey (1997), in her institutionalist

approach to understanding urban region dynamics, claims that the social world is not constituted of autonomous individuals, each employing their own preferences in order to obtain material satisfaction. Instead it is built on individual identities, as socially constructed. She then emphasises that attitudes and values are formed through social relations with others. She writes:

“The powerful forces which construct our lives are actively made by us as we acknowledge them in our doing, seeing and knowing, in our system of meaning,... We maintain, modify and transform the structuring forces which shape our lives,... We are shaped by our social situation but we actively shape it too.” (Patsy Healey, 1997, pp. 56-57)

This concept is like the Islamic idea that grants similar capability to individual and society to affect each other simultaneously (see section 4.6).

As a summary of the institutional approach to planning, as we understand it, on the one hand, we shape our social structure and we are formed by it too. We live in a network of relations, our interests are shaped in such social relations through systems of meanings called culture. Also, we live in a multi-cultural world. In such a world we are seeing, knowing and acting differently. On the other hand, we need to understand each other, as well as our different cultures, for co-existence in shared spaces. Such an understanding is formed through active communication under certain moral value conditions. We should in turn, Healey (1997) stresses, try to create a new cultural layer to “making sense together” while “living differently”. And spatial planning, as an interactive process, is a project to make this task possible.

However, this research is concerned with how to provide new sustainable capacity in a local community which has experienced particularly severe socio-economic difficulties in the form of urban decline. So, local people are the centre of the study. Dealing with people and their capacity needs an essential serious consideration of people’s culture. Further, we need to understand local residents’ culture because we want to communicate with them. Therefore, in order to act in social policy making processes, a cultural focused concept is a vital task.

It seems that the institutionalist approach as a strong and well structured concept has the capability to establish a new line in socio-cultural analysis of social life and probably a good foundation for spatial planning theory. The approach is based on cultural diversity and consensus building. We found it the most useful and closest to my idea. But, because of the following reasons we had to bring some changes and modification to the concept in order to develop an alternative approach to planning for application in this thesis as well as its case study.



1. *Cultural diversity*, although a real fact outside of us, it is rather different in extent and depth from one context to another. For instance, a multi-culture society (or cultural diverse society) in the West is completely different from the East and developing countries. Why do we have to accept such a diversity as a true fact and attempt to develop and maintain it? Why should people be in conflict? Why do we have to find ourselves “meeting with strangers”, even when we are neighbours in space? What does cultural-diversity mean, and to what extent is it acceptable? If we are living in the world of differences with unstable and different values, how can we share communication values which are supposed to be the pre-requisite for worthy and normative communication leading to cultural transformation? Do we have to live differently while we need to make sense of each other? Why do we not consider similarities between different individuals and societies rather than differentiation.

It seems that society, under the conditions of cultural diversity, is a group of individuals who “live together separately”, seeking only their own (and their group) preferences rather than a real stable society with a common sense. It can be claimed that the society will be formed when we start to understand each other through communication and try to find shared values. But how can such a society survive? It requires some basic elements to save itself and be embedded in the definition of society. Perhaps, we need a new direction and definition of culture and society in which more attention is paid to more shared values and similarity. Such a new society needs stable rules, principles, values and commitment to grow and sustain itself. Who provides shared values and how?

Obviously the “members” of society, as active agencies, and “society”, as a social system, both together can make social life desirable and sustainable. But, at the same time, if these members are involved in many other social network relations with rather different, and perhaps conflicting, rules and system of meanings and values, what will happen then? The answer can be summarised in three options. First, the new society will change its basic rules and values and adapt itself to the dominant system of meanings, if any. This means that a new society forms, many join and probably many leave the society. It is clear that identity as a key characteristic of society cannot be formed in such a rapidly changing society.

Second, because of lack of stable shared values, the society may collapse and disappear. Third, the members may live in the society while they are not belonging to it, and they do not feel commitment to preserve the society. In other words such individuals seek their own interests, and use the society more than believe in it. They are members of the society as long as the society benefits them, after that they will leave it

for another chance. Either way, many individuals play different, even opposite, roles in different societies, in order to obtain only their personal material preferences. This fact is very common in our political and economic world. In other words, in such a society, there is no strong power to affect and shape individuals' values, or that which exists is so weak and ineffective, i.e. the individual is more powerful and effective than the society.

Talking about society, we mean a stable, sustainable and strong social system based on shared values and systems of meaning among some individuals as members who feel commitment and obligation to such meanings and following rules and principles. Accordingly, in the above three choices such a proposed society will never be achieved.

2. "*Context*" has been considered as another important element in the cultural debate. Evidently most contemporary Western approaches to social science have been grounded in the context of Western countries. Consequently, they have been well influenced by existing Western culture. According to Giddens' structuration concept, we can claim, all theoreticians, as agencies, are affected by the society in which they live. This will influence their thoughts and ideas. Their ideas, therefore, could be something else, if they lived in another society with a different culture. Thus, we can not generalise our theories to all other societies around the world. Furthermore, although we cannot prove different fortune for societies in developing countries from westerns society, there is no evidence to prove the same evolution and ends for all societies. We require, to consider all kinds of societies (at least major ones) around the world within their own context and then study the reliability of our approach. This can be an attempt to develop a hermeneutic-structuration approach to study the society. This can fit in with our general methodology of theological realism defined in the earlier pages.

This thesis emphasises that in many countries, in particular developing countries, (although the division of countries into developed and developing is a misunderstanding of the definition of development), cultural diversity is not an obvious dominant fact. Rather, it is hypothesised that cultural similarities and social cohesion in the developing societies, like MIS, are more visible than in the West. In fact, cultural diversity and multi-culture societies, in extreme forms of cultural individualism, are an evident common feature of most western societies. It appears that such a cultural diversity could be the effect of social segregation and vice versa.

There are obvious differences between individuals, as members of a certain society with shared values, traditions, and behaviour, which construct their culture. We understand that culture should be studied within its own context. It is also argued that

culture is learned, and it is transferable through communication. When we refer to a particular culture, we mean a set of generally shared values, beliefs and behaviour that can be viewed in a such a society. It is also emphasised that culture is changeable, because it is adaptive and integrative. Further, there are some basic values based on human nature which are absolutely true and unchangeable, although they may be temporarily covered or weakened by some powerful social behaviour. And finally it is accepted that culture is itself not a one dimensional phenomenon. Rather it consists of several “*layers*” or *levels*. Some layers are stronger and more stable while some are changed rapidly. In the alternative approach developed in this research the emphasis will be on the significant role of culture and its associated values, in a homogeneous society, in changing the environment and improving the quality of life.

It is crucial to discuss and clarify what is the original source of such principles and how can we distinguish right from wrong. The question of whether these principles are performed according to man-made laws or whether they follow religious laws, is not in the scope of this current research. In fact, we are discussing existing culture and actions, whether they are performed according to God’s law or not.

In a society like MIS, it is hypothesised that people’s culture is a unified and sustainable force. So, studying such a unified culture, which we want to use as the driving force of socio-economic regeneration, needs its own concept rather than the cultural diversity approach. It seems, we need to come one step back, considering causes more than effects and attempt to find the roots and foundations of a society rather than changing direction. At this stage, the research intends to develop the theoretical basis of this debate.

#### **4.6 The Human-Capacity Building: An Alternative approach to planning**

Clarifying our understanding of the world and the nature of beings; as well as identifying the way of knowing and nature of knowledge, the research investigates an alternative approach towards social life and planning activity.

The *Human-Capacity Building* approach to planning is explored for this purpose. This concept is based on the *unity of being* approach to the world through a normative *theological* methodology which was explained in the earlier parts of this chapter. The definitions of man, individual, society, and their interaction, together with a clarification of culture and its role in social life, are the next two steps which lead us to develop an

alternative approach to planning towards understanding the problem and making adequate policy to tackle it.

#### 4.6.1 Individual, Society and Culture

Kotb (1980) defined human life as a “unity” based on material abilities and moral values, between which no separation can be made without the resultant disorder and confusion. Such a unity can make harmony between the world and human life, between society and individual, and between human material needs and moral desires. This harmony is established in favour of both material and moral aspects to bring both in a healthy position of well-being and development, simultaneously. Similarly, this harmony is not established to be in favour of either individual or society separately, rather for both together equally. There is no priority of individual over society or vice versa. Individual preferences are considered as much as social and public interests.

Tabatabaei (1974) and his student, Motahari (1979), generated a new integrated concept about individual and society, through a philosophical viewpoint. They believed in originality (authenticity) of being for both individual and society, simultaneously. They referred to a philosophic term of “unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity” to explain such a relation. This means that the society is a true existing unit, while constructed by many single units as individuals.

The unity of the society is based on shared values, beliefs, thoughts and in a word, on culture. Tabatabaei and Motahari argue that the identity of society is constructed by culture. The life, growth and changes, evolution and decline of the society depend primarily on the culture which distinguishes it. They stressed that individuals have the same nature since they are all human beings, they also are different because of their personality, beliefs, interests and so on. Cultural multiplicity arises through individuals’ interests, aims and actions. It can be said that the relation between individuals and society is like some different amount and shape of natural water producing various functions and effects in the world while their nature is the same, constructed by Hydrogen and Oxygen. We can integrate all these waters together and benefit from their huge united original energy and capabilities while they have different specifications by themselves. This relation is neither static nor completely unchangeable, but dynamic and relatively changeable. This idea has many similarities with Giddens’ structuration theory, which is one the most dominant and famous concepts in recent western social theory.

Elaborating such a relationship is very important to shape our understanding of both personal and societal roles of individuals in their everyday life. According to this

approach, on the one side, social life is not only a subjective and idealistic matter, but a real objective fact. Societies are born, live, grow and die. On the other side, man as an individual has his own beliefs, values and behaviour, he can affect his society while he is affected by the society. Society is a real compound phenomenon. It is not a composition of individual bodies and their physical existence, rather it is a composition of ideas, interests, beliefs, wishes and norms some of which have remained from the past and some from the present time. This is a spirit of societal life what can be defined as "societal spirit" or "social identity". In this concept, two identities, two actions of actor, and two "selves" have been supposed for individuals: private personality and social personality.

In this concept, Society has its own autonomous real existence, while individuals' lives and interests are relatively independent, because the characteristics of individuals are not dissolved in their societal life.

On the one hand, society has particular rules and principles, separate from individuals' interests. This means that the rules and principles of social actions, social relations and norms, social development and decline are not merely derived through individuals' natural and personal lives. Rather, society as a cultural phenomenon, follows its own set of social disciplines.

On the other hand, people are not passive actors who are controlled and programmed by certain rules and principles, rather they are active and capable to change dominant rules while they are affected by such existing principles. The individual is an actor, he can start a new role in his society intentionally, but his new role would probably be influenced by others' roles as a social system. This is a continuous interaction between individual and his society. This idea is the same as Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, although the foundation and world views of the two concepts are different. However, like Giddens, we look at people as agency, active rather than passive, and choice makers rather than fatalistic. For Giddens, people, as individuals, live in webs of relations through which structuring forces bear in on them. People, as active agents, and in the social situations of the relations within which they live, build their own sense of identity (Healey, 1997).

All of these activities, these norms of being and acting in the human condition, cannot be integrated and cannot find unified meaning except through the existence of a powerful comprehensive dominant culture. Such a culture is like a network of principles, values and attitudes which dominate all of human life and in their totality are able to integrate individual and society according to such dominant principles. It is the way to achieve social unity in human life.

As already explained, in this study, society is a unitary phenomenon while at the same time is a multiple fact. It is multiple because of the nature, capabilities, personalities and social characteristics of individuals. And it is united due to a single dominant culture and system of meanings which builds the society. In other words, such a societal unity depends on the power and domination of a general single culture among the members. This means that social cohesion and unity is potentially undermined by unstable cultural values and the appearance of many new “webs of relations” consisting very changeable diverse cultures.

So, culture is a multidimensional rather than single dimension force. It moves between society and individual, between continuity and change, between unified and diversity and between values and attitudes.

To clarify this concept of culture more precisely, let us suppose culture consists of some different layers. It might be explained that stable shared values are located in the lower layer. They are covered by diversity and differentiation of values and systems of meanings on the top. Indeed, the higher the layer, the more diversity and instability, the lower the layer, the more unity and stability. When we talk about cultural diversity, we are expecting to treat the top layer of culture. When we refer to unified culture we mean the whole body of culture of a society as a single unit including diversity in the top and unity in the bottom layers.

It should be considered that the idea of cultural cohesion is not the same as the concept of a cohesive place-based community which has a long tradition in social life. According to the place-based community approach, culture is built upon a single moral order and a set of common values and systems of meanings and ways of acting for a village life in a place-bounded world with limited exogenous social relations (Williams, 1975). By contrast, we understand and believe cultural diversity to be a part of our social life. But we are approaching such a diversity in a particular mode. We are not going to deny it, ignore it or neglect it. Rather we wish to consider cultural unity as another major fact of our social life, at the same time. We attempt to explore unity through diversity. We believe that the society is only built and sustained through common values and shared systems of meanings. This is produced by unity rather than diversity.

We need to share our ideas with others to build consensus. Thus, we always need basic shared values more than diversity for a sustainable strong society. The goals and ends of society are defined by such basic shared values. Therefore, we should try to explore rather than ignore them as well as make a suitable environment for them to flourish.

It may also be supposed that the unity of being approach is another version of functionalist theory. We should emphasise that functionalism looks at man as an "automaton, programmed, directed and controlled by the system called society", while we picture man as an active agent who constructs his own social worlds while being shaped by his own social system.

The difference between structuration theory and our approach lies in the concept of cultural diversity and changes. We emphasise that when reason and feelings, thoughts and ideas, understandings and knowledge, beliefs and emotions, values and attitudes, habits and customs appear to come from individuals' actions and behaviour, and result in a new cultural identity, we call that new identity "society". In other words, culture determines how members of a society think and feel, it directs their actions and defines their perspective on life. The society is formed by its own culture and it will be incomprehensible if the culture is eliminated.

So, such an understanding of culture may lead to the emergence of new approach and implication for public policy. This concept looks at public policy as a strategy for cultural development together with economic development at the same time. This means that culture can be built and developed. It is not a fixed "given". This approach considers culture as a resource for regeneration, rather than just material resources.

Subsequently, the present study aims to show how such a proposed unified culture in MIS society can produce energy for socio-economic regeneration. Considering culture as the key element, as well as deliberately building cultural cohesion as the essence of our approach to society, provides a suitable base for constructing an alternative approach to planning.

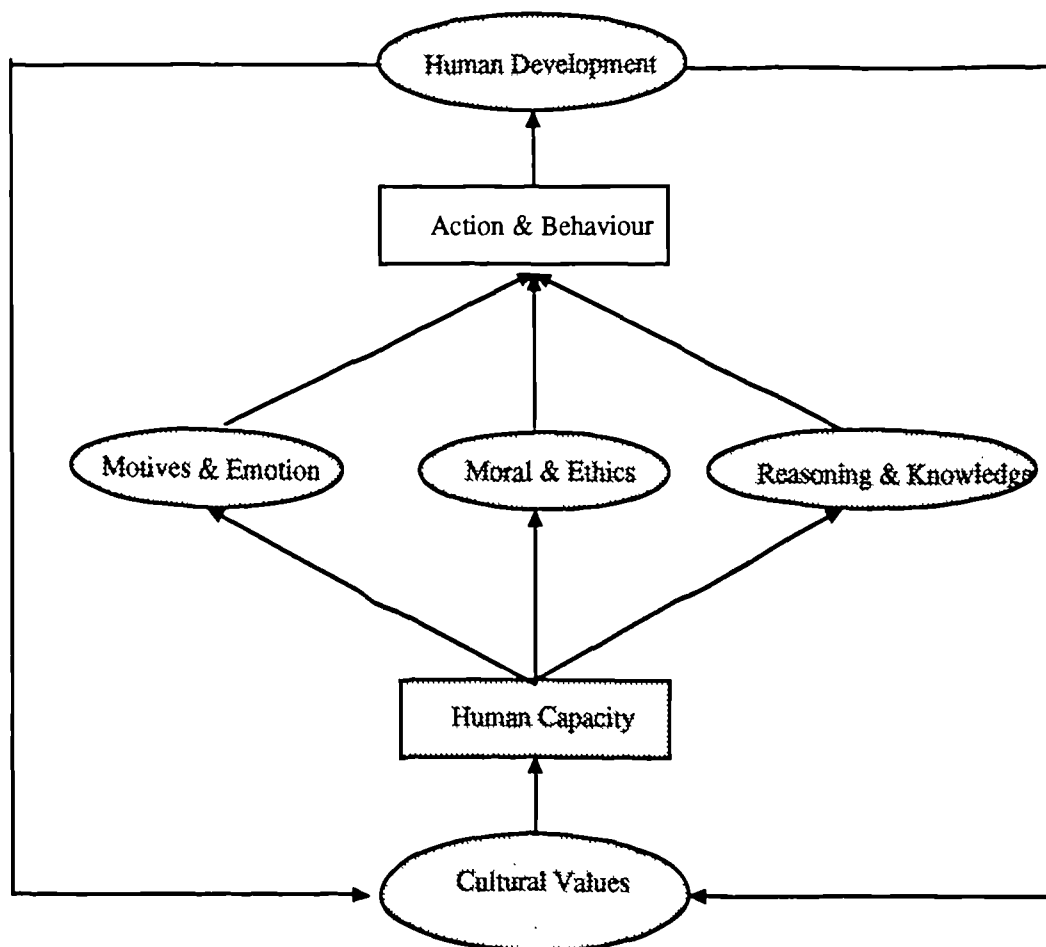
#### **4.6.2 The "Human-Capacity Building" Approach**

The idea of achieving urban regeneration through human capacity building is derived from a set of general concepts about the world, human agency, social life, and development. As already explained, this research looks at the world as a unified notion in which all its parts are consistent and working in harmony with each other (however, in many cases man has affected this harmony). We also consider the human beings as active agents who can change their environment and improve their quality of life. This thesis emphasises that human beings have a considerable amount of potential and capacity for development, which has not adequately been considered. This capacity needs to be recognised, co-ordinated and employed in development. The notion of development is also important. In this concept "*development*" is not limited to physical,

economic or environmental improvement. Rather development is a process of improvement in all aspects of human life, material and moral. Development is a set of harmonious changes in various parts of society leading to political, social and economic improvements in quality and quantity. The synthesis of such changes is improving the social and individual life of human beings, this is called, here, *human development*.

The “*human capacity building*” approach is based on *human development* in the three areas of: “motives and emotions”, “reasoning and knowledge”, and “moral and ethics”. Human “action and behaviour” is shaped by these three aspects of human capacity (Mir-Baqiri, 1990). All these aspects of humanity are rooted in the deep layer of culture and the shared system of meanings of the society. This approach is simplified in Fig 4.1. In this concept the objective of planning depends on the definition of human nature and his needs.

Fig 4.1 The Ideal Model of Human Capacity Building Approach





As the model shows, the knowledge, ethics and emotive dimensions of human capacity are rooted in cultural values which show how humans define their identity and their sense of themselves.

This model emphasises that human beings are able to change their environment and obtain their economic and material interests through the development of instrumental-technical reason. But that is not enough by itself for other aspects of human life. Through reviving moral values and developing individuals' moral reasoning we can understand each other and more importantly, we can share new attitudes with others and take account of some new parameters within our social life more than through encouraging an existentialist individualism.

And finally, through development of emotive-aesthetic reason, we could think more about ourselves and our own emotions and their effectiveness in both our social and individual life. This concept is beyond the narrow instrumental rationality which seeks to maximise individual preferences. The issue of human (or social) capacity has been discussed by some urban scholars through various approaches to social policy and planning.

#### **4.6.3 Human Capacity, Social Relations and Social Capital**

Innes *et al.* (1994), in their Consensus-Building concept, identify three types of human capital which are important in the built environment. They are: social, intellectual, and political capital. For them, social capital can be defined as trust, norms of behaviour and networks of communication; intellectual capital as shared understanding of the facts leading to common meanings for discussion and a move toward agreement on policy issues; and political capital as agreement on proposals to create a better mutual view of the outside world and a better political position. They emphasise that all these three types of capital are interconnected, and the absence of anyone will affect the effectiveness of the others (Innes, *et al.*, 1994)

Healey (1996) in her collaborative approach to urban planning suggests five significant concepts which concern building collaborative relationships with urban region "stakeholders". They are identified as: integrative place-making, collaboration in policy-making, broad stake-holder involvement, using 'local' knowledge and building 'relational' resources. She emphasises the last two, local knowledge and relational resources as the bases of social capital. She stresses that the institutional capacity of society will be created through increasing both "*knowledgeability*" and "*relational capacity*" of society. While, social mobilisation of society, as the capacity to organise

for social action, itself, depends on the extent of local knowledge and relational capacity of society.

Considering these two above concepts, this research emphasises that *knowledge* (or intellectual capacity), *social relations*, and *motivation* are the three significant elements of human capitals which in turn, facilitate socio-economic development.

### *Motivation*

It has been argued that development can be produced through social mobilisation; also we have already considered human beings as active agents who could change the environment and structure surrounding him. Then, the freedom and choice for human action would be necessary to generate an intended action, either rational or moral. Also, it can be said that any intended action is based on a motivation(s). Motivation is an active and strong attitude that stimulates people to act. These motivations are categorised in various types, mostly from a psychological point of view. Basically, human motivations, in accordance with human needs, are categorised into two main groups of material and moral (Mesbah, 1995, Larijani, 1995). Cultural values can generate motivations in all aspects of human life. This study emphasises the role of culturally based motivations which improve and protect social relations; this can increase social capacity and in turn increase the social mobilisation of the society leading to socio-economic development.

It can also be claimed that such development will be an endogenous comprehensive development. Because on the one hand it is based on cultural values; so the quality of life and sense of well being are defined by such culture, this will make a balance between material and moral needs of individuals. As a consequence, a consistent development in both moral and material aspects of life can be achieved. On the other hand, the extent of dependency of such society to external factors is very low. It means that the generator and the driving force of development is situated inside the society rather than outside. This creates a high human capacity for development in the society.

In the model presented here, such moral and cultural motivations can strengthen social relations and also improve individual knowledge and qualification. That, again will increase social mobilisation of the society. Also, motivation, social relations and knowledge are interconnected. That means, at the same time the improvement in social relations and local knowledge will generate new motivations.

### *Knowledge*

Local Knowledge is the shared understanding of local people about the existing situation, problems and the potential solutions of their space in which they live, as well as the awareness of the possible policies that can work efficiently ( Geertz, 1983). The important points in considering such a knowledge are firstly, being shared and common among the people; secondly, is its locality nature (particular place). This knowledge is based on the communication and the extent of people interests to participate in building their environment. For some, this shared understanding may include technical information, shared experience of using and/or suffering from the local environment, social and economic wisdom and the process of development. All such knowledge, as already explained in the model of “city as culture”, helps to shape individuals’ attitudes toward different aspects of their lives (see Chapter 5).

This thesis emphasises that the understanding of facts is socially shaped; i.e., the attitudes have already been evaluated through some criteria and values. If we wish to have shared knowledge, we need to have the shared criteria and values for evaluating the facts. This means that such knowledge or attitudes are affected by people’s cultural values. For instance, in a diverse society, how can we generate such knowledge if everyone follows his (her) own culture and associated values. If the definition of freedom, for instance, is different for individuals, how can we obtain a common understanding of the existing social and individual rights in the society. As Healey stresses, “they (the stakeholders) will have different values too, and will use different forms of reasoning and styles of communication. These differences reflect the different social worlds from which stakeholders come.” (Healey, 1996, pp. 16-17). This means that people will see the facts differently because of the different significance they have, according to their values.

Therefore, it should be noted that, whilst shared knowledge is one of the bases of social mobilisation and development, this knowledge is based on the shared values and systems of meanings of the society which will be the other source of social mobilisation too.

It seems that the generating or improving of local knowledge, as a shared attitude, in a unified culture society, is much more achievable, than in multi-cultural and diverse societies. In such a unified culture society, efforts should be concentrated on improving communication systems as well as accessibility to information. The crucial point is that local knowledge makes individuals’ attitudes towards their lives come closer together and decreases the conflicts and tensions caused by lack of information in the society.

Such knowledge has therefore, a considerable contribution in generating, improving and protecting social cohesion and social movement.

### *Social Relations*

Social relations have been recognised as a significant human capital in urban regeneration policies (Amin and Thrift, 1995). Social relation capacity provides a desirable environment for generating and developing social cohesion and social mobilisation. It is important to emphasise that positive and efficient social relationships can provide a suitable environment and circumstances for the flow of information, and understanding among people leading to the generation of the local knowledge. At the same time, such positive relations are based on some original shared values.

The characteristic of such social relations, showing the extent of social cohesion and the existing social networks has been identified as social capital or “*institutional capacity*” (Putnam, 1993, Innes et al., 1994, Amin and Thrift, 1995, Healey, 1996). They argue that the existence of a positive social capital can increase the knowledge (or intellectual) capital of the local people. The social capital also increases social mobilisation of the society for new circumstances and an adequate response for development.

People, through social relations, learn how to exchange their information and improve their knowledge. Social relations assist people to know each other better, feeling responsibility toward each other as well as understanding others’ difficulties and the possible ways to help them. Social relations are an adequate transmitter as well as protector and strengthening of the people’s cultural values. People can generate a “shared sense of community” and shared problems and fortunes, through communication and a close social relationship.

In this concern, many believe that trust and trustability play a crucial role in generating, protecting and reinforcing social relations (Fukuyama, 1995; Healey, 1996). The question arises as what is the source of trust and how can we improve it?

### *Trust*

“*Trust*” has been recognised as the basis of positive social relations. Whilst there are many different definitions of trust, as a general meaning, in this study we mean that trust is a belief towards someone (or group, party, institution and so on), that they are honest and will not deliberately to do anything to harm you. Also, when you trust somebody to do something, it means you believe that he will do it successfully or properly, or at least will do his best (Collins, 1988).

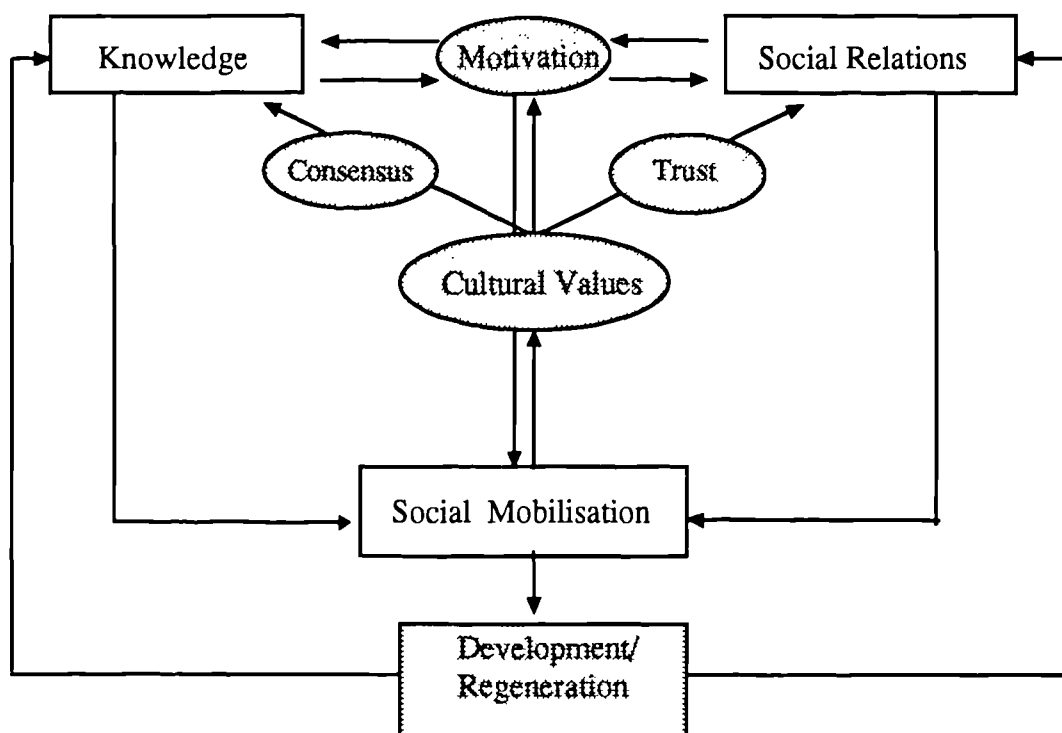
As it has been defined, trust is a kind of belief. Considering our debates in the preceding parts of this research, it should be clear that belief is a subjective matter. It means that trust is a kind of value or attitude. It can be said that temporary and superficial trust is a type of individual's attitude toward a subject, which is not very important, such as trust placed in a shop (or a company) when buying a pair of shoes. Whilst a deep and sustainable trust is a kind of value which is based on strong roots and stable grounds. The shared way of thinking and acting generates the situation for people to understand and make sense of each other better. People can trust each other when they have shared cultural values.

### *Consensus*

Talking about knowledge brings about the notion of consensus. Consensus has been defined as a general agreement among a group of people (Collins, 1989). Indeed, both consensus and knowledge are inter-connected via a learning process. Whilst we can not claim that all learning efforts produce knowledge, it can be stressed that knowledge is the product of learning. Apart from formal learning (education) which is based on an special curriculum and specific method and system, we always learn from and are taught by others through our social relations during our everyday life.

Local knowledge is the product of such learning activities through communication and negotiation in our social relations. Such a learning is shaped by the presence of mutual consensus and shared understanding of the world and the way of analysing it. This consensus and shared understanding are based on a common system of meaning and shared way of thinking, and this is what has been termed culture, in this research. So, shared cultural values can generate shared systems of meanings and as a consequence improve the consensus among people. Such strong mutual consensus can provide a fertile ground for generating and growing local knowledge among the society. Of course, this is a feed-back loop; at the same time, shared understanding (knowledge) can improve consensus among the society. This will create a shared system of meanings and perhaps new culture. But, this kind of culture and system of meaning is normally unsustainable, because they are based on our knowledge which changes rapidly and itself depends on many other factors, such as technology. It has been discussed that a shared understanding and common values need a long stability to be accepted as a part of culture. So, perhaps, attitude is a better term for such a shared understanding produced by knowledge alone.

The relationship between human capacity and cultural values is simplified in an ideal model (Fig. 9.2). This model shows how human capital and cultural values can act as the driving force of socio-economic and cultural development.

**Fig 4.2 The Human Capacity, Cultural Values, and Social Mobilisation**

As the model shows, the centre of human capital is cultural values. Cultural values can generate trust and consensus between individuals. Trust is the vehicle of social relations. This means that trust leads to an improvement in social relations. This, in turn, improves social capacity and increases, consequently, social mobilisation in society. On the other hand, consensus helps to increase people's knowledge as another source of human capacity. This again increases social mobilisation of the society.

In fact, trust and consensus provide bridges between social relations and knowledge; while social relations and local knowledge are interconnected. The richer the social relations, the greater the exchange of information and experience and consequently the greater the "store" of knowledge. On the other hand the more the knowledge of the environment, the more shared understanding there should be of one another, and consequently social relations would be more positive.

At the same time social capacity (relations) together with intellectual capacity (knowledge) creates a great potential and capability in both society and individuals for causing changes and improving the quality of life. However, the improvement of social relations leads to the strengthening of social unity, and the improvement of intellectual capacity leads to the improvement of the capability of individuals. Both these two have already been targeted as the first aim of urban regeneration strategies, called human development. The social and intellectual capacity together with cultural values may lead

to a generation of more social mobilisation in the society. This will produce a greater contribution, more participation and more co-operation in the society and between people and the government. And this would be the driving force of socio-economic regeneration, as the second aim of regeneration strategies.

We should therefore consider all these aspects of human life in the development planning process. We should focus on moral values and emotional development as well as physical and technical growth

### **Planning Activity**

As a multidimensional activity, planning in this approach concentrates on culture while considering all other aspects of human life. The present study stresses that “social cohesion”, as an essential part of society, is rooted in “unified culture” rather than cultural diversity. Also, cultural development can reinforce human capacity of society. This means we need some basic shared rules and values, or system of meanings to understand each other. In this approach planning is an interactive cultural process. This approach can be outlined as follows:

1. Facts and values are the two implicit parts of both human life and human knowledge. In the context of planning we not only cannot separate them, but we should consider both together. Facts relate to people’s material needs and what is observable. Values are more concerned with moral and ethical notions. We cannot easily observe them but we can feel and understand their existence and their effectiveness in our life, even if we are not able to observe them.

2. Society is recognised and underpinned by its culture. Its stability, reality and identity is based on culture. Cultural unity and integration result in social cohesion and united society. Cultural diversity is a real fact of our social life, although the extent of such diversity differs from society to society. In a culturally-unified society, such diversity is mostly on the top layer of culture rather than within the deeper layer.

3. The first task of a planning system, developed in this approach, is to understand people and explore shared values and similarities among society. This should be done through communication and debates with people. Communication, here, is not the aim and end for planning. Rather communication is an adequate tool and method for understanding and knowing people.

4. Discovering and understanding “Goals” can be identified as the second task. Indeed, this is a very important and difficult duty. For us, goals are not the outcomes of negotiations between professionals and politicians. Rather, the main goal is respecting people’s cultural values and attempting to provide a suitable environment for such shared values to flourish. Obviously, other goals are derived from these values. To achieve those goals, people should be involved in the processes of identifying ends and objectives, designing means and short term policies.

5. The social, political and economic development of societies is the consequence of their human development and changes in their system of reasoning. For example, the dominance in western societies in the “modern” period of the single dimension of technical and scientific development has led to a single preoccupation with the material development of social life. Thus, the consequences of neglect of the moral and emotive dimensions of human life are visible in many aspects of contemporary western life.

6. As the general aim of planning in this approach, a set of desired conditions and relationships among various elements of social life should be considered rather than a single target. Thus, the criteria for the evaluation of policies is based on the extent and direction of changes in such a multi-dimensional aim. For us, planning, is a rational process, but not with the same meaning as the famous rational planning concentrating on individuals’ preferences through scientific standard methods. It is not the same as Harvey (1985) definition of the Capitalistic idea: “doing whatever must be done to re-establish the conditions for a positive rate of accumulation”. Rather, the “human-capacity building” planning is a rational process consisting of exploring goals, conducting surveys, analysis and evaluation, selecting a new strategy and monitoring. Change in the extent of shared values among the society is the main indicator for evaluating the achievement of such a planning, in general.

7. This approach requires a continuous interaction between people and planning processes. Planning influences people’s lives while how people respond to planning may change it too.

8. Due to the nature and aims of planning in this approach, planning policy achievement needs participation of all parts of the society, agents and agencies and in particular common people. Planning activity attempts to create good relations between all parts at different levels, in order to create trust and consensus among them leading to identifying goals and objectives as well as sufficient support for policies and strategies.

9. Urban regeneration strategy in this approach considers the development of cultural and moral values as well as economic and environmental regeneration. It is



stressed that the target of planning action should be the development of the human capacity in the city. Human capacity could be resources of both material and moral development in the city. Social, economic and environmental regeneration can be achieved through human-capacity development.

10. In the field of local planning activities, the planner needs to know about people's culture, their similarities and differences as well as their attitudes. The planner needs to identify how people's culture is unified or diverse, through understanding their beliefs, values, wishes, customs, and traditions. Local people should participate in building their environment and their own life. This means that planners and social policy maker should stimulate them to participate as well as give them a real effective role in all aspects and stages of planning processes.

## Conclusion

A consideration of the socio-cultural evolution of human societies shows that people, regardless of their origins, race or nation, believe and behave in a way which recognises some things as "good" and avoid some things as "bad". The criterion for such a distinguish between good and bad are values. We are not going to claim that all values are absolute and permanent, rather, in our opinion, the meaning of some values are not changed by social movement. We say that the notion and understanding of such values, as subjective matters, are stable. What is changed is our understanding and interpretation of such values based on our interests, (not the same as individualist conception of interest).

Furthermore, the new and old interpretation of such values are not essentially contrasted each other, rather the change is the evolution of meaning referred to a certain subjective matter to apply it in our every day life. For example the idea of "freedom" is an absolute value for all societies and human beings. It is rooted in the nature of human beings who like freedom and attempt to obtain it. But, the meaning of freedom is different in societies.

Logically, on the one hand we need to have relations with each other, we thus need some stable shared values, rules and norms to understand our roles and rights in social relations. On the other hand, we cannot build such shared rules and principles, such as a set of planning rules or the human rights act, unless we agree to accept the same meaning of what we think and believe. That is, the existing diversity between our values is a fact, but not a truth, i.e. it "is" while it "shouldn't be". We should try to understand cultural diversity around us as the upper "layer" of our culture, but, at the

same time we should attempt to explore, support and expand shared understanding and systems of meanings as the lower, or even hidden, “layer” of our culture. To do this task, we need a deep, precise and integrated consideration of our world and our society. And we should start from the basics.

The main purpose of this chapter was to build a conceptual foundation developing an alternative approach to planning public policy. We argued that “modern scientific-rationalism” and the dominant focus on economic growth and material benefits as the policy “target” would not be applicable for tackling urban problems any more, in particular in a society like MIS. The approach presented here, emphasises that human needs are based on human nature. So, we need to consider moral, ethics and emotive needs together with material needs.

Also the approach stresses that understanding people’s cultures, as an essential part of social life, is a vital task. On the one hand, cultural development is an objective of public policy, and on the other hand cultural values can be employed as the driving force for economic regeneration, through increasing human capacity in society.

Therefore, the target of public policy in our approach is not only economic and material but also human and cultural development. But, this general idea now needs to be translated into what it could mean for an approach to urban regeneration in a city like MIS. In the next chapter the research focuses on urban life and its main elements which should be considered, from a cultural viewpoint, for improving human capacity in the society.

# 5

## The City as Culture

### Introduction

The failure to identify the significance of "*people's culture*" in research for policy purposes, over the last decades, has led to several ambiguous pictures of social and economic life. In fact, previous social research has considered people in a one-dimensional way, as economic interests and not as active agents, until recently. In other words, in order to have a real picture of relations and interactions among various aspects of social life, a serious consideration of people's values and beliefs, is needed. In the context of urban planning, therefore, an understanding of various interrelated aspects of urban life and their impacts on different environments is vital.

The previous chapter attempted to explain the author's viewpoint about the world and social life leading to an alternative approach to planning as a theoretical basis for illustrating various aspects of urban life and, in turn, urban regeneration strategies. This chapter is an attempt to show the role of cultural values in urban life as well as the role of people in building their city. The model of the city as culture, as a normative approach to the city, intends to describe the interrelations among subjective and objectives elements of urban life to illustrate how people can really be involved in the future of their city.

The central purposes of this chapter are: firstly, to define our perspective on urban life by emphasising culture as the *driving force of social mobilisation* through a

*dynamic system*; secondly, to identify the main aspects of *socio-economic urban regeneration* and their interactions in such a dynamic system; and finally, to provide a suitable basis for the empirical part of the research which follows. This chapter proceeds in four main sections. In sections One and Two we review briefly the modern and post-modern patterns of city life in order to show the lack of adequate consideration of culture as the main part of social life. Through an alternative perspective on the city and urban life, section Three, attempts to clarify our understanding of the city as well as identifying key elements of urban life and their relationships in a cultural context. In section Four we develop an alternative approach to policy making processes to show how urban regeneration could be achieved in this alternative model of a city; and where should we start from.

## 5.1 The Modern City

Reviewing the urban studies literature, in the modern period, shows that a wide range of studies and a number of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, economics, urban design and planning, and geography have made major contributions to the evolution of this knowledge. It might, therefore, be claimed that the area of urban studies is multidisciplinary, rather than interdisciplinary or both. The picture of the modern cities is different from the traditional one. They are different in form, size, physical function, facilities as well as social relations, cultural function and people's life style. Evidently, urban studies, in the modern era, are characterised by a lot of variety of theoretical and empirical works. Nevertheless they did not pay adequate attention to the role of people and culture in this context. However, three dominant conceptions of modern city are to be considered in this part of study: economic, political and cultural.

### 5.1.1 The Modern Concepts and Theories

In 19th and early 20th Century, cities concentrated on industrial, commercial and exchange activities. The development of such cities led to the emergence of a world economy which caused, in turn, the development of the cities (Short, 1996). This means, in that period, those cities were mostly driven by economic forces, while political and cultural aspects of city were understood later in 20th century.

In the economic context, many studies focus on the importance of the city as the place of economic development and vice versa. The idea of considering economic surplus as the prerequisite basis of the city has been developed by some Marxists to show that city growth is a function of inter-city trade in the regional surplus

appropriated by the cities also ascribes significance to the initial urban economy. They believe that other forms of organisation are secondary, derived from conditions concerning the economic base. For them every activity in the city is built upon its economic specification and situation. That means, for them, the structuring force of urban life is economic.

Stressing the importance of the economic function of the city, many, such as Boulding (1963), believe that there is a systematic relationship between urban development and economic development; economic decline and growth are inevitably associated with urban expansion. In other words, the development of cities is linked to economic growth. Also, the extent and form of urban growth are affected by the nature of economic change and development. In a wider economic context, some look at the city as the product of the changing international division of labour and economic factors (Jacobs, 1969, 1984). Such an understanding of the city and urban life led to the development of various economic and mathematical urban modelling approaches (Bracken, 1981; Bertuglia, *et al*, 1987)

To emphasise the intervention of government and public agencies in city changes, urban politics considers both local state agency activities and the external mobilised social groups imposing their policies. This concept claims that urban life is affected by local states' decisions on plans and policies; and at the same time, local governments are influenced by citizens through elections, movements and challenges. The idea of the welfare state has had a significant role in developing the role of the state and market in organising processes of consumption. Thus this approach was important to illustrate both capitalism<sup>1</sup> as a system, and also urban politics and conflict (Savage and Warde, 1993). David Harvey strongly criticised the socio-economic and cultural relationships in the modern city under the capitalist political economy system. He emphasised that all aspects of urban life in a capitalist society are rooted in "money" (Harvey, 1972, 1991).

With emphasising the economic and political features of the city, Castells argues that the form and architectural features of cities and neighbourhoods are the products of struggles and conflicts between different groups in society. As he points out,

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<sup>1</sup>Capitalism, here, refers to an economic and political system in which property, business and industry are owned by private individuals and not by the state. Capitalists' analyse tend to stress the establishment of the political system as the organisation of the economy. In this system votes are treated as people with preferences.

education, medical, transportation and communication services as well as accommodation and leisure facilities are the products of modern industries which people 'consume' (Castells, 1983).

In this concern, the Chicago School defined cities as creators of social disorder. This approach to the city led to expanding state support, through the reformation of local politics, for solving urban problems. In succeeding years, public housing, planning authorities and development controls, public agencies for education and health, and public leisure facilities appeared to transform the urban perspective into one pre-designed by welfare state strategies (Saunders, 1989).

In comparison with economic and political context, the city in a cultural context has been debated in a limited body of literature. Such studies are generally based upon different definitions and understanding of the role of culture in urban life. A set of various ideas about culture has been discussed in the last chapter. However, reconsidering some important cultural issues in this context helps to clarify the basis of the idea of city as culture.

Wirth (1938), the well-known social scientist of the Chicago school, initially presented 'urbanism as a way of life', as a comparative study of features and elements of urban and rural life. Wirth believed that the influences which cities exert on human social life are greater than the ratio of the urban population would indicate. For him, the city is not only increasingly the dwelling-place and the workshop of modern man but it is the original and controlling centre of economic, political and cultural aspects of human life (Wirth, 1938).

In a similar way, Williams (1973), the well known analyst of British culture, compares and analyses urban and rural lives. He believes that the contrasts between urban and country lives are one of the major forms of the crises of British society. He pointed to Capitalism as the cause of the divorce of the sphere of the material from the moral, not only in the dichotomy of work and leisure, society and individual, but also in that between city and country. For him, country life consists of "old ways, human ways and natural ways" while, urban life contains progress, modernisation and development. The rural-urban contrast is therefore seen as the window through which we look at life and our existence under capitalism. He believed that people's sense of identity was strongly linked to their place of living, in a solid physical sense. (Williams, 1973). Some other urban scholars emphasise that culture and city grow together (Harvey, 1996). Some commentators have different perspectives in this context. For example, Herbert Gans (1962) presented 'the urban villages' concept as a common phenomenon in modern cities. The 'urban village' or neighbourhood could involve close kinship and

personalities, and seem often to be actively created by city life. Claude Fischer (1975) pointed out that the residents of cities are able to collaborate easily with others of similar background or interests to develop local relations. They can also join different religious, ethnic, political and subculture groups, while a small town or village is not able to develop such a variety of social relations and activities.

These conceptual points of view illustrate a set of varieties of urban definitions and explanations in the modern era. It can be concluded that the urban studies literature, taken as a whole, emphasises two main “driving forces” of urban change, the first is economic and the second is politics and government. Only a few urban analysts emphasise culture. But, they have rather limited conceptions of culture to the city and urban life. So, what this thesis seeks is an alternative approach which locates culture as the fundamental driving force, but in relation to economic and social forces.

### **5.1.2 The Model of the Modern City**

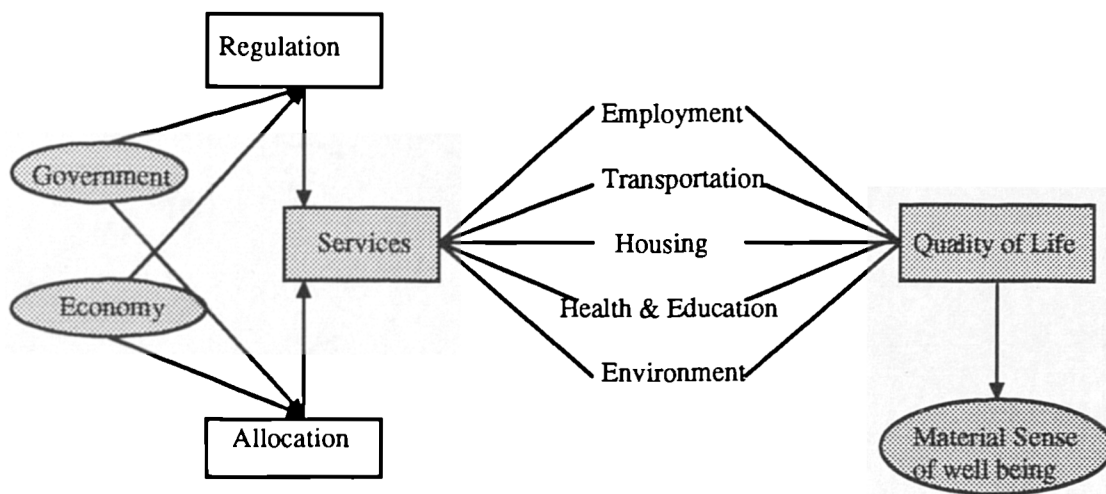
Rapid industrialisation, in western countries, led to the emergence of new characteristics for the city. The industrial city had become the place for economic activity, mass production, mass consumption and increased profits. Providing accommodation for workers in housing areas around the factory was the main feature of the city. The economic characteristics of capitalism caused crucial changes in urban features and growth leading to the emergence of new types of industrial city.

A developing feature of cities in the nineteenth century was the increasing intervention of governments in the development process of the city. In the 20th century such an intervention has been accompanied by strengthening of the role of the private sector and private market in the urban economy. Such modern models of the city were normally characterised by scientific universal objectives and rational process (Short, 1996).

The purpose of urban life in the modern rational approach to the city, in western modernity, was seen mainly in the promotion of development which brought about quality of life and residents' satisfaction. This purpose was broadly developed from the public health and housing improvements to a more general concern for education, work and recreation facilities. This model, then, attempted to resolve conflict over needs and actions between members of society, i.e., social objectives but with the emphasis on material well-being. At the same time, this model took the existence of a capitalist economy for granted.

In these models, the promotion of individual well-being has been a central goal of modern societies, and of many units within them. In such models the universal goal itself has been a worthy one and is to be actively pursued. But there are real and important differences of attitudes towards the definition of well-being and how it is to be maximised (Fig 5.1). This general ideal model helps to illustrate the objectives, the driving force and the main element of such a model.

**Fig 5.1 The General Model of the Modern City in the West**



As the model shows, the “driving force” of changes in the modern model of the city is focused on governmental plans together with economic resources. As explained above, the intervention of public authority and public funds to achieve the goals of the plan have been inevitable. The objective of urban government was to deal with the adverse effects of economic growth.

In the modern city, mass consumption is an essential part of mass-production. This means that people’s life style should be controlled and be directed to consume new fashion products and thus generate new economic activity rather than economic production following people’s needs.

In fact, new forms of political and cultural domination are expressed in the public housing estates, the modern civic centres, the towers and office blocks reflecting new sets of economic, social and political forces (Eliott and McCrone, 1982).

The targets of most policies and strategic plans have been summarised as obtaining standards of life which are mostly based on material benefits and individual maximisation. The characteristics of such fixed standards and indicators, the allocation



of material resources and the process of changes have been determined and controlled by the governments through rational economists and planners.

The connections between the various elements are generally based on a rational cost-benefit analysis. For instance, education is programmed for producing qualified work forces. Work is organised for more production. Housing is planned for accommodating workers and also as a kind of product in the market. Recreation centres and transportation are designed to create an attractive place to encourage new business to come and invest in the city.

Overall, quality of life starts from material resources and is achieved through improvement in the economic aspects of human life, via the rational intervention of government. The role of people generally appears in this model through the vote for election of the government, as representative democracy. The public policies, in this model, generally focus on restructuring and reducing inequality in urban life facilities such as education, health and housing (Pacione M., 1997).

## **5.2. The Post-Modern City**

In the post-modern period, the concept of “different things to different people” has become more common. This has led to a major change and the emergence of new ideas about society and the city. These new ideas mostly advocate and encourage people’s participation in plans and decision making processes. Consequently, during the last two decades, new directions in the definition of urban life as well as urban policies and strategies have been drawn up.

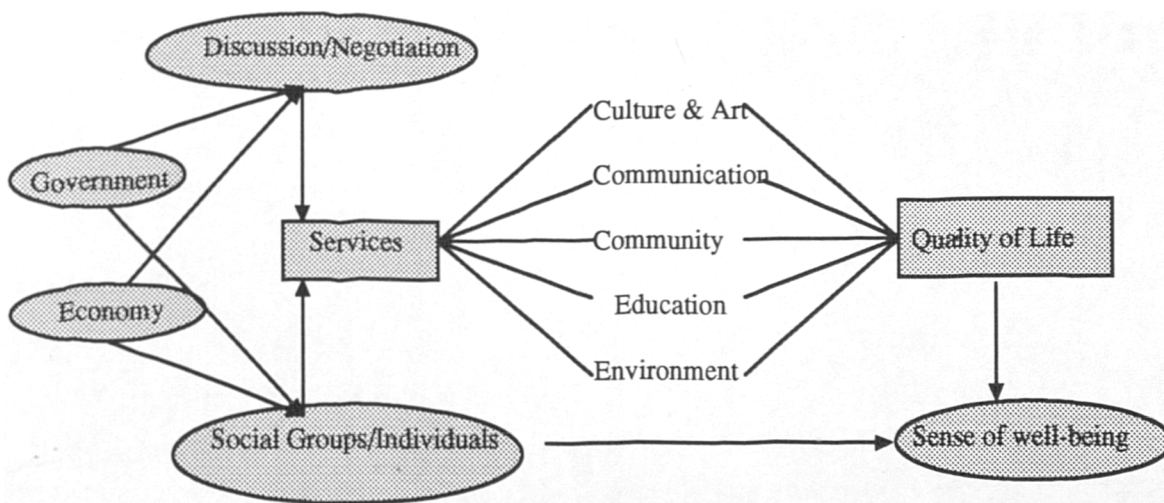
City culture has been recognised as the specific product of the post-modern approach to city and urban life. The post-modern city culture is defined as a combination of the “imperatives of business, ecological responsibility, and quality of life” (Short, 1996). This means that quality of life, environment and business are the main objectives of social life in the city, and are seen as interconnected. This model might also lead to a celebration of tensions and conflicts in the society

At the same time, the quality of life and sense of well being are eclipsed by income maximisation and economic opportunity. For instance, the quantity of employment is often considered as the quality of employment. The quality of environment is recognised as a good means to attract and retain business in the city (ibid.).

In contrast with the modern rational city, in the post-modern culture city the door of discussion, communication and criticism is open to all. People have the opportunity to debate, present their ideas and challenge for new alternatives (Gans, 1969; Innes, 1994; Healey et al. 1995). But, even in such a “culture-based” concept, economic opportunity and material welfare have been the main objectives, i.e. in such a city cultural development is seen as contributing to economic ends (Kearns, 1993).

Some commentators, through the post-modern window, look at culture as art and historical heritage. This idea has led to define the city as a place dealing with the expansion of art museums, coffee bars and restaurants and the renewal of old buildings. Others have defined the city culture as a place to display visual arts, theatres, cinemas and orchestras (Zukin, 1997). All of such perspectives on the city and cultural policies arise from a limited understanding of culture as expressed in a set of visual symbols.

**Fig 5.2 A Model of the Post-Modern City**



In the post-modern model of the city, in contrast with the modern one, the intervention of government is reduced. So, the fixed standards are eclipsed by the appearance of deregulation and decentralisation of administrative intervention. Communication with residents is emphasised as a significant element of planning and decision making processes. Considering cultural diversity, in various forms and definitions, together with different landscapes and mixed land use are the clear signs of a shift from rational standardisation to more diversity and relativism. The connections

between different elements are based on the communication and management of such diversity.

But, the driving force of changes and the targets of policy are the same as the modern model: material resources and material benefits. There is no effective role for cultural and moral values in the city life. Mass production and mass consumption are still the main aim of economic activities in the city, but more customised, to reflect diversity and differences. The only difference with the modern model is a shift in products from industrial and textiles etc. to information, hi-tech industries as well as arts, festivals and new leisure centres.

Such a model, like the modern one, cannot be a suitable model for urban regeneration in MIS. Firstly, the driving force of such a city still requires a remarkable amount of material resources to replace the lost oil revenues. This kind of support from the Iranian government at this time is probably impossible. Second, it is hypothesised that the existing situation of social groups in MIS is based on cultural unity rather than diversity, while the basis of this concept is cultural diversity. This model assumes there is diversity and therefore different attitudes and lifestyles have to be accommodated in the society. At the same time, it provides no ideas about the potential of cultural unity in the case study area.

Overall, in spite of the acknowledged importance of culture in post-modern debates (however that term is defined), there is no clear discussion on the role of culture in shaping people's attitudes or sense of well being in the context of the city.

However, in both modern and post-modern concepts about the city, quality of life and sense of well-being have been addressed as the most important targets and objectives. Thus, it seems we need to define initially: what do quality of life and sense of well-being mean; what are the criteria and indicators for such notions and how can we measure them? Two important points, in this concern, should be considered:

- 1) Quality of life is the term that has been targeted in much analysis of urban social life. The notion of quality of life is somewhat different from the one used by the media and by most public officials. The more usual meaning is related to the environment and to the external circumstances of an individual's life, e.g. pollution, quality of housing, aesthetic surroundings, traffic congestion, crime and so on. These features of urban life have generally been defined, managed, and controlled by municipal cities and states through rational planning rather than people's attitudes and feelings. Indeed, they shape only a limited aspect of the whole of satisfaction that makes life worthwhile (Dalkey, 1972).

Evidently, the quality of life is not merely a matter of the conditions of an individual's physical and material resources, but also the matter of how these are judged and evaluated by oneself to others. The values that one brings to bear on life are in themselves determinant of one's assessed quality of life. This conception has been illustrated by Rogerson *et al.* (1989) in their empirical work. They ranked the towns and cities of the UK in terms of quality of life as perceived by their residents. Indicators include access to open space, price of housing, cost of living and access to services. Results showed that towns like Bradford, which would appear low down in a league table based on objective indicators of social deprivation, appeared to be excellent places to live when judged by their residents

As explained, the target of modern measures of urban life are defined by standard and fixed indicators. The important questions for such concepts of urban life are whether they make a major contribution to an individual's well-being, or whether they are formed and understood by some subjective factors such as sense of achievement, love and freedom and so on which are rooted in people's cultural values and their attitudes.

2) The indicators of social conditions in both modern and post-modern patterns of urban life, generally identify and measure material conditions. They are products of the accounting or record keeping of institutions and agencies with specific interests and functions. Indicators such as the employment rate, income level, education, housing quality and health have been employed to show quality of life, for many years. Whereas people's attitudes towards their quality of life may be far from the interpretations of planners and decision makers .

The traditional rational model, generally, emphasises more external indicators of well-being. They have generally focused on population, employment, immigration, land use, transportation, and housing figures, rather than people's attitudes and their values.

Overall, maintaining an equilibrium between urban populations, their needs and environment is the main common objective for both the modern and post-modern patterns of urban life. They seek societal well-being by advocating environment quality and optional arrangements of physical facilities. These indicators have been determined and specified as the standards of life. These standards order and control urban development activities and the way of life in the city, covering fields such as housing, education, recreation, work, shopping and transportation assets.

However, this study aims to present a systemic dynamic approach to city, in order to define the meaning and the purpose of quality of life and sense of well-being.

For this model, the source of such meaning and definition is people, the residents of the city in a certain time. Therefore, we require to consider people's attitudes carefully, understanding their meaning of quality of life and how they are satisfied, and giving them a real serious role in planning and decision making processes. The model of the city as culture, developed here, is an attempt to deal with this idea. This model advocates the idea of planning "with" people rather than planning "for" people. So, two points are considered: first, a combination of objective and subjective indicators, and second, considering people in the process, seriously.

### **5.3. An Alternative Approach to the Culture City**

The idea of culture city in the current study is built upon a human-capacity building approach to planning, presented in the previous chapter. This perspective concentrates on multiple dimensions of urban life rather than a single dimension such as purely economic relations or lifestyle diversity.

As explained in the last chapter, culture consists of both continuous and changeable layers. Some cultural elements reflect continuity and some are changeable, although there is obvious interaction between such different cultural layers. In the context of the case study of this research, it is hypothesised that the continuous facets of culture and shared values are stable, dominant and effective in residents' everyday lives, i.e. a unifying culture rather than cultural diversity. It means that the cultural values act to provide a unifying system, despite diversity in individuals' characteristics and their socio-economic situations, or even their attitudes. The idea of the culture city also attempts to show how focusing upon cultural values can be efficient grounds for both human development and economic regeneration through generating social cohesion in the city. Since this perspective is built upon a people-centred approach to society, the role of local people has been considered and highlighted in three dimensions.

The first dimension is people's cultural values and shared systems of meaning which shape, control and guide their lives. Such shared values and their role in people's urban lives should be well understood and clarified, by planners and policy makers. Cultural values, as the deep layer of shared meaning are the driving force of changes in the city.

The second dimension is people's attitudes towards various indicators of urban life. People's perception of "quality of life" and their sense of "well being" should be

investigated through their own ideas that is, via direct communication. This is the top layer of people's culture, which is more obvious and may change and shift rapidly.

The third dimension is people's role in making their future. People are the means as well as the ends of the culture city model. This means that their capability and the skills of local people as active agencies and actors in social, economic and cultural life, should be improved as the main source for economic regeneration. At the same time, their moral and cultural values should be developed and encouraged to flourish, as the major target of urban regeneration, specified in this study.

The following key points can clarify the scope and meaning of this perspective.

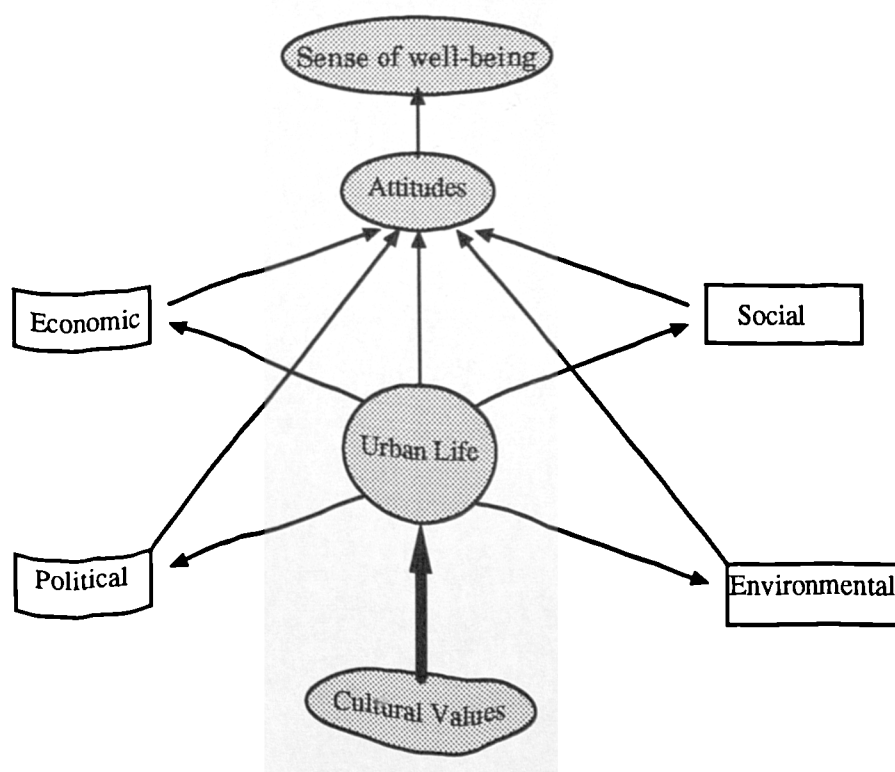
- Any society, at any time and place, is built upon central systems of meanings and shared values which shape people's lives, this is called here culture. The culture of a society can generate a consensus among people in the society. In other words culture can integrate single individuals, cement them together and make a society, but it cannot exist independent of human action. It may be changed by people but not overnight, rather very slowly and gradually.
- The city is the product as well as the producer of the culture. This means that both cultural values and material needs influence the city form and function. At the same time, city form and functions may changes residents' attitudes and perceptions to the world that can affect their culture; this is a "feedback loop", but works over long time.
- The city as culture is a people-centred perspective. It is built, shaped and developed in accordance with people's culture consisting of values, beliefs, wishes and needs. This perspective emphasises social welfare rather than individual utilities, together with the integration of primary socio-cultural relations rather than separation and segregation in social life. In other words, the culture city generates the environment to achieve the proposed agenda for human development as well as economic development.
- Planning in the city as culture is based on cultural values and consequently is a people-centred activity. People learn from planners at the same time they can teach them adequately. Thus, we need to consider planning "with" people rather than "for" them.

## Dimensions

The model of the city as culture attempts to integrate major aspects of human life in the context of a city through a culture-based and people-centred perspective. The culture city is a multi-dimensional perspective of urban life illustrating how different aspects of human nature, individually and socially, can be harmonised by cultural and moral values. Also, it shows how to achieve both human and economic development through promoting such a coherent system of life.

Generally, four main aspects of urban life have been identified in the culture city as: economic, social, political and environmental (Fig. 5.3). The basis of these four dimensions is culture, while urban residents have been considered as the centre of this model. This means that, cultural values exist only in the presence of people and society; i.e. in the absence of people they cannot find expression.

**Fig 5.3 The Dimensions of Urban Life in the model of City as Culture**



Obviously, studying all of these four dimensions of the culture city needs a team of researchers and a great amount of time and thought. What this research aims to do is to find appropriate indicators, from each dimension, of the chief elements of the city and to try to explain the relationships between such elements in urban life. This needs to be done with a research method which involves people.

### 5.3.1 The Key Elements & Indicators

Like other scientific indicators, urban indicators can be developed to characterise the various conditions of human life. The city as culture model suggests two parallel series of indicators: one indicating how people themselves evaluate various aspects of their lives; and the other indicating the external or environmental conditions relevant to each of those aspects. It requires a combination of facts and values to be considered in any policy evaluation.

The elements of the model are categorised into two groups of *subjective* and *objective* measures. Cultural values and people's attitudes towards various aspects of urban life are put in the subjective group. Characteristics of family, education, work, communication and community neighbourhood are categorised as the objective elements. Such classification is employed to develop the idea of the city as culture and to distinguish it from traditional models.

It should be noted that the key elements recognised for the culture city are familiar and visible in any city. What distinguishes the city as culture, as a concept, from others' is the definition and our understanding of these notions and more importantly, how such elements are connected to each other. In this section, the author shall describe the roles and positions of each element in urban life as specified in the model, in order to elaborate the meaning of the culture city.

#### Values

The starting point is concerned with the needs and aspirations of people and their attempt to fulfil them, which has been referred earlier as the *deep layer* of culture. Values are more clearly defined by Jones and Gerard (1967). They argue values express the relationships between individuals' emotional feelings and particular cognitive categories.



Allport (1963) noted that a value is a belief upon which man acts by preference. Rokeach (1973) defined values as sustainable beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. The *sustainable belief* is the meaning of value which is emphasised in this research.

In most definitions, a value is a dominant belief to make a distinction between “bad” and “good”, “ugly” and “beautiful”. Many believed that man has his own choice and is enabled to judge, decide and act. His action is based on his values, attitudes, personality and situations. Whilst values are normally associated with attitudes, they are not the same as attitudes; they arise from the deep structure of beliefs or even human nature. Further, value is a judgement of perceived attributes and of paths to goals. Values encourage the person to move around his environment because they define its attractiveness, beauty and benefits.

The concept of cultural layers can be developed by clarifying different layers of cultural values. It might be said that cultural values consist of three main layers. In the deepest layer *Human Values*, what we ALL share as humans, are placed; in the middle layer *Moral and Religious Values*, which are mostly derived from religion, are located; and finally *Traditions*, which come from historic backgrounds are situated in the top. These different layers of cultural values together with *Attitudes* which are located in the surface, shape the structure of *Culture*. The analysis of values has much relevance to the study of human nature, religion and tradition which mostly are the origins and sources of values.

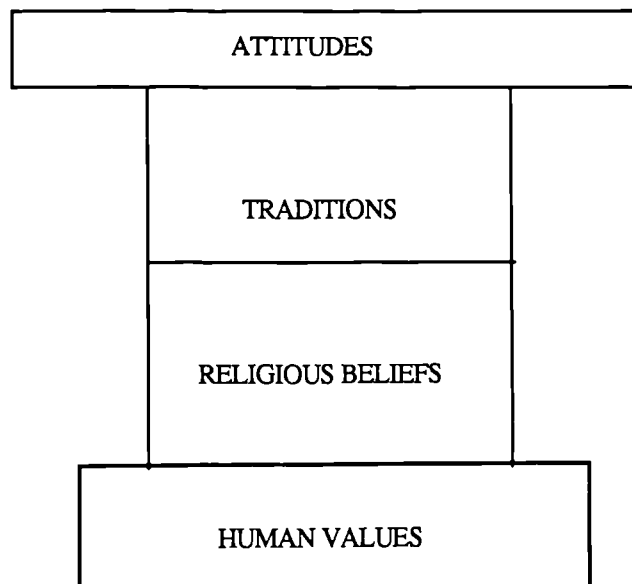
### Attitudes

It seems that the comparison between values and attitudes can clarify their meanings as well as their differences. As the first distinction, values occupy a more central position in human personality than attitudes. It can be said that values are more abstract, stable and less specific than attitudes. Katz and Scotland (1959) look at values as a system; they believe that value-systems are not concerned with specific objects or persons, while attitudes are. Therefore, changing individuals' values is more difficult than their attitudes. That is one of the key points considered through this investigation. It is hypothesised that people's values hardly change during urban development processes while their attitudes may be altered by rapid changes in life style. In the structure of culture conceptualised in this research, attitudes are located on the surface. Compared with values, attitude are more superficial, varying and change faster.

On the one hand, it might be said that individuals' attitudes relatively depend on their values. For instance, if you value peace as an essential phenomenon for human societies then you have a negative attitude toward person(s) who disturb the peace and a positive attitude towards those who protect it. In other words, a value is a belief and an attitude is the approach and the tendency to think and act. In the process of thinking, a person needs to analyse and evaluate. Thus, he needs his own values and perceived criteria for evaluation and probably judgement. So, if some attitudes change, it means that either the values have already changed or the other causes of attitudes, such as socio-economic conditions or particular situation have appeared.

People's attitudes also can affect their values. Thus, considerable attention has been paid by social scientists and psychologists, to understand the nature of attitudes and the way they affect and change original values, and shape new ones. In general, there is a strong relationship between an individual's attitudes and his behaviour. In case of conflicts between man's perception of an object and his values, his decision and behaviour finds an important role. If he acts according to his attitude where this is in conflict with his values, it means he has changed or ignored his values. If this happens for a long time, attitudes gradually seep into the values position and finally a new belief, would appear as a value (Fig. 5.4).

**Fig 5.4 The Conceptual Building of the Culture**



However, it can be said that, there is relationship between people's values and attitudes and their behaviour. Thus, understanding people's behaviour needs to

understand their values and attitudes very well. In their valuable empirical research Lincoln and Kalleberg, (1992) investigated the relationships between culture, attitudes and commitment in work in a comparative study of United States and Japan. They claim that the US-Japan commitment gap is not so much a matter of management and organisation as it is a reflection of deep-rooted cultural strains in both societies. They argue, world related attitudes and behaviour are the results of widely shared and deeply rooted cultural values and beliefs (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1992).

As the culture building model shows, values, in the lower layers are more stable and change very slowly, whilst attitudes are rather different and change quickly. Values and attitudes are interconnected and influence each other, but it seems, the influence of values upon attitudes is stronger than the impacts of attitudes on values.

### *Family*

The meaning and the role of family and kinship in urban life have been considered from many different points of view. For many, such as Giddens (1993), the family is a significant form of sincere, truthful and obligatory partnership between members.

In a modern life, a nuclear family consists of father, mother and child(ren), while a traditional extended family consists of coexisting generations, usually from grandparents to grandchildren. The modern model of the nuclear family emphasises individualism leading to loose contacts with other relatives around the country (Simonsen, 1997). Although, in the modern urban area the growth of the number of people who choose to live by themselves, the increasing numbers of single-parent families and “single person” households parallel the individualist concept of life and in contrast with post-modern social networks. In contrast, the traditional extended family is a kind of strong and wide web of social relations with family members and relatives.

Although the structure and function of these two types of family are rather different, some important characteristics such as sincerity, trust and feelings of responsibility towards each other are common values between almost all family members. This can become a key asset in urban economic regeneration, as we will discuss later (see Chapter 9). Further, an alternative way to integrate the privacy and individual life of nuclear family and kinship relations may be drawn in a small scale community neighbourhood in which relatives live in a neighbourhood to support a family structure as well as establish kinship networks as a basis for the function of everyday life. In the later parts of the research, tribal and clan relations (a form of large

extended family) will be considered as a significant type of social relations in the city of MIS.

As noted, family life, and particularly child-rearing, is given high priority in everyday life as well as in the whole life. The child originally shares the values and attitudes of his parents. This will not be developed in a suitable way unless in a stable, healthy, and favourable environment of the family. On the other hand, the structure of a family cannot be solid and stable unless the parents, and consequently the child(ren), share basic values and attitudes.

The model of culture city suggests that the nuclear family can generate a close kinship network. Such a kinship network can play a crucial role to sustain and transmit cultural values as well as help economic growth. The kinship networks not only present themselves in everyday life, however. They also create the basis of more binding modes of practice such as mutual care and assistance from one generation to another (Simonsen, 1997).

The urban life strategies of the family are formed and developed according to cultural values and shared systems of meaning in the family. In particular in the culture city model, the family is specified as the first and basic institution constructing a small society with particular relations, in which human beings grow and learn the basic lessons of life. Each member of the family has a specific responsibility and role in harmony with others.

In the city as culture model, the rights of the members, social norms and written law are built upon cultural values. This means that social norms and written laws will be more accepted by the society if they are consistent with people's cultural values. So cultural values can generate moral responsibility towards others forming family and social relations.

Overall, in the culture city, family plays two important roles. In the socio-cultural context, family is a first institution to educate and protect cultural values and generate a good environment for human development through healthy child rearing. In the economic context, the family can provide a suitable environment for partnership, co-operation and to help each member to access economic opportunity. This economic role of family and kinship will be emphasised later in this study. All this seems to mean the family should be the target of urban regeneration policy, not the individual.

### Education

Together with language, education is one of the most important capabilities to distinguish humans from other animals. People's existence would be directly impoverished if they have insufficient access to such skills. Nowadays, education expands very fast. It is now more than the skills of reading, writing and maths, but it is directly linked to new technology and communication networks and the skills of a work force (Short, 1989).

Schools, colleges, universities and all other educational units are recognised as the second major factor in urban life in the culture city. The cultural values within the society stimulate and support the creation of a suitable environment for educating children and adults. On the one hand, the education system and contents can support and extend cultural values among children and people. On the other hand, the school systems helps people to communicate directly and in a convenient way. This means that if the educational system establishes a just and correct policy, it can generate social and economic development through the improvement of people's skills, information and communication (Ryan & Adams, 1995).

In the culture city, after the family, "school" is the second basic institution for building the society through rearing and educating the next generation as the members of society in the future. The school has sufficient capability to produce good human beings for making the future. The school in the culture city is not considered only as an academic institution. Rather, it is also a moral and cultural institution.

School as a significant part of the culture-centred society, creates a suitable environment for the growth of cultural and moral values as well as social norms among pupils, teachers and others who get involved in education activities.

Like the family, education is a key element of both socio-cultural and economic development in the culture city with the following functions. First, education is an environment for teaching and extending cultural values among students. So, it plays a leading role to get the child from the family, continue his education and submit him to society. Second, improving people's knowledge and their skills generates a high capacity within people towards human development. On the one hand, such advanced skills and knowledge and information provide qualified people to deal with advanced and complicated jobs in a new efficient way. A high level of education facilitates access to media and communication with other people and systems of meanings. This leads to generating and developing individuals' attitudes toward their world around them.

Thus, education has a significant position in the culture city. In a systemic way it is connected to family, work, media and attitudes.

### Work

Socio-economic research considers unemployment and essential strategies and policies to tackle such a significant problem are highlighted. Most academic and professional debates focus on the level of employment. The only questions raised are: How many jobs are created? What is the level of unemployment? while not enough attention has been paid to the quality and means of work as well as the satisfaction of work forces. Most people are not satisfied with their work. For many, work is neither an enjoyable activity, nor does it have much purpose beyond providing a wage. This means that we require a wide understanding of work and its role in urban life. Work is a central element of people's lives; it takes up much of our time and most of our energy. Job creation is not the only purpose of employment. Too often job-creation schemes fail. In principle they are a good idea but in practice they are used to restructure the unemployed. Job creation schemes involve the workers in the goals and strategies of the employment (Short, 1989). In fact, people have been considered as "units" of input to a production process, units of labour, not as creative human beings.

Of course, we need to see work as a significant element of our society. Work has a crucial role in building our relations to each other. The culture and the nature of the work may direct our social life. Work can either develop humanity and cultural values or alienate individuals to work merely for obtaining some personal benefit as wage. But work is not separate from the remaining parts of our social lives.

In the culture city, work is a major element of urban life, not only as a means of obtaining money for material needs, but as an activity which shapes individuals identity and forms their social relations through shared systems of meanings and common values. Many social networks are based in the work places and occupational communities.

In a communicative context, finding a new job links people to new social networks of friends and colleagues. Exchanging ideas and finding new shared attitudes are the products of work-based relation webs. When people lose their jobs, they lose their friends and social relations too. Work can, therefore, be identified as a main component of urban communication networks.

Creativity and purpose are the two main requirements for work to be a rewarding experience. If people can exercise a measure of control over their work,

then job satisfaction will be higher. Perhaps self-employment and small business could be the most appropriate paradigm of work which can integrate creativity, purpose and control together. This will be discussed later in this research.

### Community Neighbourhood

The modern model of urban life emphasises the separation of population on the basis of class and occupational stratification. This was a major consequence of the domination of modern work practised by the Oil Company in MIS (see Chapters 2 and 8). Individualism, in this model, stimulates the worker to maximise personal economic benefits and private preferences rather than social relations and interests. In such a model social life, neither in the economic aspect nor on personal terms, depends on local ties and relations.

In contrast, the model of neighbourhood in the culture city can work as a key element to re-establish extended families and kinship networks as a foundation for community and integration with both people and place. In this idea, many families, parents, children and perhaps their relatives live close to each other in their neighbourhood. This generates a strong connection between family and neighbourhood attachment.

Community neighbourhood can be a suitable environment and place for the creation and growth of cultural values. "Family", "school", "work", "neighbourhood" and the "urban society" are essential parts of our communication networks. They play significant roles in social relations as well as transferring, developing and protecting cultural and moral values of the society.

People's participation in the context of social, cultural and political activities is a very important and familiar function of such a neighbourhood. The meaning of the community network in the neighbourhood supports social integration together with normative communication for living together with some shared values. Therefore the neighbourhood plays a key role in the culture city for creating a favourable environment for the growth of values in the society. This sort of neighbourhood, in MIS, has appeared through clan relations. In MIS, a group of families that are related to each other via kin and marriage (brothers, cousins and their families) normally live close to each other in the same neighbourhood, and form a strong clan-based community.

In the culture city, the community-neighbourhood reflects the style of social life under some common cultural values, in contrast with modern individualism. For the

residents of such a neighbourhood, life develops meaning in a social context rather than through individual utility maximisation. Individuals, in this model, think about their neighbours, and feel responsibility to share happiness and difficulties with others; i.e. people respect each other and look after each other. Such a community-neighbourhood can produce social integration and cultural values can flourish in such an environment. In other words, social relations in the context of a community-neighbourhood are based on people's shared values. It can be said that people live "with" their neighbourhood rather than "in" it.

Conclusively, a community-based neighbourhood can play a key role in social integration, through communication and co-operation for providing a suitable environment and facilities to improve social welfare, security, education, etc. The neighbourhood can even protect family solidarity through building strong relationships between neighbours. Such an environment as a significant element of the city can generate and protect cultural values in the society. Such a community can also be the basis of a co-operative economic activity.

### Communication

The communication systems and mass media, now, are used to encourage, or discourage, people into a broad succession of activities and behaviours that they would otherwise not respect. David Fan (1988), in prediction of public opinion from the mass media using both computer content analysis and mathematical modelling shows that public opinion can be controlled in a predictable fashion by messages in the media. He also believes that the press is able to shape opinion within agenda items as well as to set the agenda for public discussions (ibid.). This idea of the cumulative impact of information derived from media clarifies the importance of communication to people's attitudes and behaviour.

Considering such theories and existing facts in reality together with the extensive communication development such as mass media, literature, internet and satellites raises a crucial question for people who have rich cultural and moral values. How can we avoid being controlled by others and still be able to keep our own attitudes and values. Therefore, if we do not resist this cultural push then we will have to yield ourselves to the dominant persuasive communication, and because of many different attitudes and interests presented by media, consequently no consistency in our behaviour or our attitudes would be possible (Reich & Adcock, 1982). That means our attitudes, under certain impacts of media and similar conditions, could be led away from our deeper cultural values, producing different issues.



On the other hand, social-cultural beliefs and values can be defined and supported by widespread mass communication. The communication system and power, now, is able to describe and classify social problems and fortunes as negative or positive and then determine how to tackle and how to achieve them. For example, human needs, first, are defined by mass media, then the proposed ways and methods to provide such needs, and finally the new production related to such introduction will be presented by mass media. This process is organised and directed by business and politicians. They can even predict and control people's votes under specific circumstances. But, to achieve this, media directors need to change people's values first, because values are the most stable and powerful phenomena which resist changes and also give people the criteria and ability for evaluation and decision making. Thus the effects (negative or positive) of communication on people's attitudes, values and behaviour are very important, in social life.

In a positive way, communication can be used as a rather convenient facility to preserve, protect and strengthen people's cultural values. Through positive communication people can understand each other, transfer their knowledge and information, realise their existing problems and the ways to tackle them. And finally, through proper communication we can invite, and encourage people to participate to resolve their environmental problems. People's participation and co-operation are the two key points which will be emphasised in the current study in order to make the link between socio-cultural and economic dimensions of urban regeneration.

In the culture city we consider communication as an important element of social life. But, such communication should be managed and directed in a proper way. In this concern, we seriously need to consider Habermas' four essential conditions for a normative and ideal communication. Our communication and media system should be based on "sincerity, comprehensibility, legitimacy and truth" (Habermas, 1984).

Communication can stimulate and encourage people to support their moral and cultural values and also promote social cohesion rather than social segregation in the city. This could be one of the most convenient ways of increasing human capacity and people intervention to achieve social policy objectives. This is a key target for urban regeneration action.

### 5.3.2 The Dynamic Model of the City as a Cultural System

As already mentioned, the culture model of urban life is an integrated dynamic framework of most relevant elements involved in city life. According to this model changes in the economic dimension lead to changes in the socio-cultural one and vice versa. This model helps us to follow such changes, interactions and the effectiveness of all elements within a dynamic system at the same time.

The quality of life and sense of well-being provide a suitable environment for the growth of cultural values. In the case of richness of traditions and ideology (religion) as the two basic values, they will be supported and strengthened. Values and economic opportunity are the two important factors that influence family solidarity. In the stable environment of the family the child is being reared. Also a stable and solid structure of the family assists all members of that family in their own activity. The society in general, and the education system as the immediate institution connected to the family, benefit from such a good family structure and suffer from a faulty, unstable and fragile structure at home.

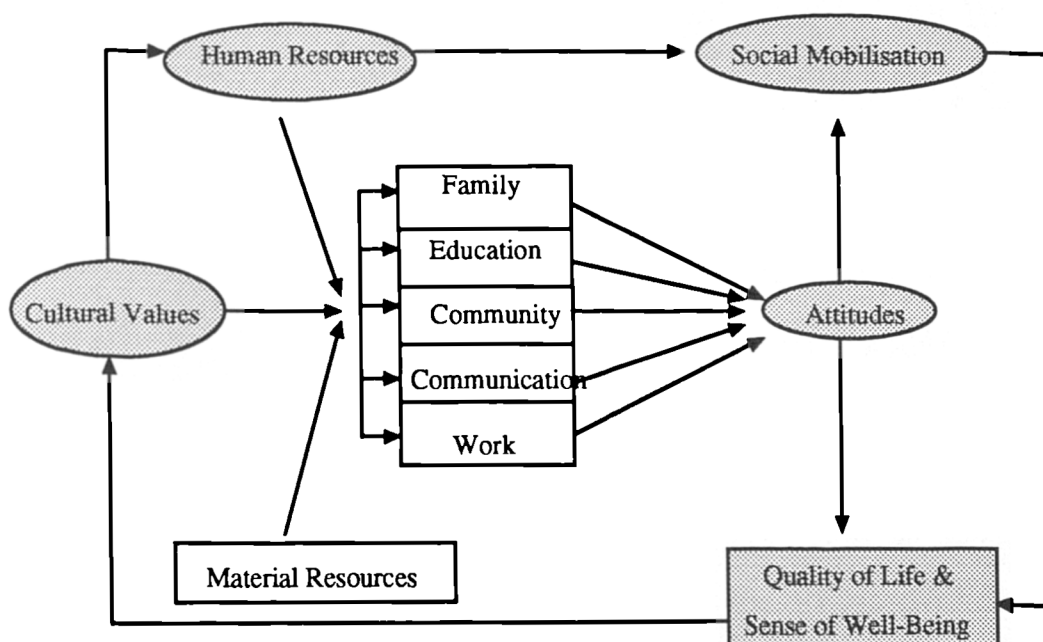
In an ideal situation, education produces educated people as supporters of cultural values as well as qualified people for economic and technological needs. The system, environment and contents of education transmit cultural values to individuals' attitudes. Communication, also in many cases is very crucial for the transmission of information, attitudes, ideas and values. On the other hand, the level of education is important in the level and velocity of communication. At the same time, the neighbourhood provides a good environment for social relations and possibly an extended family network and kinship. Therefore, it can be said that people's attitudes are formed by their cultural values, which are transmitted by family, education, work, neighbourhood and media.

People's attitudes are very important in their behaviour. So, we could have a social integration and social unity if our attitudes are not so far from each other. The origins of most social values, in a single-nation society as exists in the case study area, are relatively the same, because they are derived from the same ideology (religion) and the very similar culture. But if the other factors involved, like education and media, are not the same path, then we will be faced with a real conflict between new and traditional attitudes; this clearly happened in MIS. Some social scientists, for example, Guy Rocher (1968) believe that such a conflict and challenge is the main reason for social changes. The role of government in this situation is very crucial to manage such a conflict in an appropriate way. However, as noted, social unity and cohesion will appear if values and attitudes in the society are consistent and support each other. The

model illustrated in Fig. 5.5 describes the general perspective of the city as culture. It will be developed later, in this study, to clarify how to achieve urban regeneration.

It is important to note that the extent of the influence of each element upon the others is limited. For example, the impact of quality of life on values is positive but restricted by the condition of values. If values have already dramatically declined, then improving the quality of life and economic opportunity have no significant effects on regenerating them. Therefore, it can be said that, in a society in cultural decline<sup>2</sup>, even with a high rate of economic growth and wealth, such economic achievements cannot save and regenerate values, by themselves.

**Fig 5.5 The Dynamic Model of the City as Culture**




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Cultural Decline means losing shared system of meanings and values

Furthermore, a long period of cultural decline will finally affect economic opportunity, quality of life and sense of well-being. Comparative study between the different degree of commitment among Japanese and American workers, as already explained, is an obvious example of the role of values in economic achievement.

### 5.3.3 The Process and Outcomes

It seems necessary to explain what is the output of such a model. As already noted, the aim of the culture city is to achieve both human development and economic regeneration simultaneously. It can be said that if the urban system works in an efficient way, and the elements do their purposes sufficiently, it will be expected that the urban system achieves its aims. On the other hand, if any element is over focused then it will affect the overall system. For instance, if much effort is paid to improving the economic condition of the city, in a short time it could be effective to tackle this urban economic crisis, but in a long period other aspects of the city like family life maybe affected. And, such a decline in family structure, for example, will affect later economic development potential because of the lack of commitment, sincerity and trustworthiness, and even lack of skill development among people.

It might be said that cultural values are like a “glue” of the culture city. It brings all the elements close to each other. Values generate harmony and stability among material and economic elements, at the same time as generating motivations and moral and emotional resources and responsibilities among individuals to protect them from individualism.

And this process is dynamic. When family, education and media support each other, in harmony with cultural values, the product is an educated human being who has moral and emotional feelings and cares about his culture. Such an individual feels commitment and responsibility in his economic activity. From his economic position, he can support his cultural values rather than ignore or destroy them. In his social relations, he feels an obligation toward his cultural values and attempts to protect them. Cultural values in this system cause human development in three aspects of emotive feelings, knowledge and actions. Cultural values assist human feelings and emotions through family structure and kinship relations among the members. Education provides rationality and increases knowledge for human development also in accordance with cultural values. And finally, individuals’ attitudes, in harmony with cultural values, direct their actions and behaviour. Of course, this normative aim would be achieved only if the system of culture city works effectively.

Social cohesion and mobilisation as an outcome of this model, can be referred to as a specific characteristic of a society in which members have close emotional feelings and social responsibility towards others; they have shared interests and targets and move together for achievement. At the same time, they think about each other, to understand each others' problems and try to help each other in any difficult situation. This co-operative and collaborative approach leads them to be encouraged to participate and co-operate in building their environment and the future of their city.

On the other hand, economic development can be achieved through such a culture-based urban system. The individuals in this society are educated people who feel commitment and responsibility toward each other and the economic development of their city. Thus, it can be said that in the same socio-economic conditions individuals who do respect their cultural values can have a great and effective role in building their economy rather than others who neither respect values nor feel commitment.

In conclusion, in the model of the city as culture, cultural values are identified in all aspects of urban life through the proposed elements. This means that family, education, community, work and media transmit cultural values from a subjective area to the objective areas, and then to another subjective area of urban life. The cultural values flow through family, education etc. and lead to attitudes. These attitudes, along with the condition of quality of life, shape what people consider to be their well-being. It should be noted that social unity is the result of cultural cohesion. If there is no cohesion in cultural values, then people will be in confusion and tension and will not experience well-being. This means that the oil-rich days of MIS did not promote a coherent economic development or a good contribution to well-being, because they introduced tensions between different value systems leading to social segregation and class conflicts among local people. Now, there are problems about the material means of support, but cultural cohesion and social unity can provide an alternative basis for improving well-being, and, possibly material conditions too. In the later sections, the research will present the policy target of such an approach for the achievement of urban regeneration in MIS.

#### **5.4 The Process of Policy Making**

Basically, planning and implementation of urban policy consumes a large amount of thought, time and expenditure. It therefore needs to be justified in terms of positive effects that can be demonstrated and have public support.

*Policy* is a term used to define a set of ideas or plans that is used as a basis for making decisions, specifically for governmental activity, and may also describe its content. For many, the term policy generally refers to an explicit statement of a governance objective, with the implications and the way of implementation; i.e. a frame for subsequent action. The conceptual approach to planning outlined in preceding parts of this research requires a specific method for policy making processes. Similar to the rational planning process, in the present approach, policy objectives and strategies are designed and linked to projects and action, evaluated by outputs and outcome criteria linked to the goals and objectives. But, in this approach, policies are not merely the governments' tools for managing their activities in effective ways. And technical teams do not examine analytical and evaluative work in their offices in order to *only* serve representative politicians. In this rational policy-making style, the role of people, their culture, their values and their attitudes are neither dismissed nor marginalised by those with the power to shape the design.

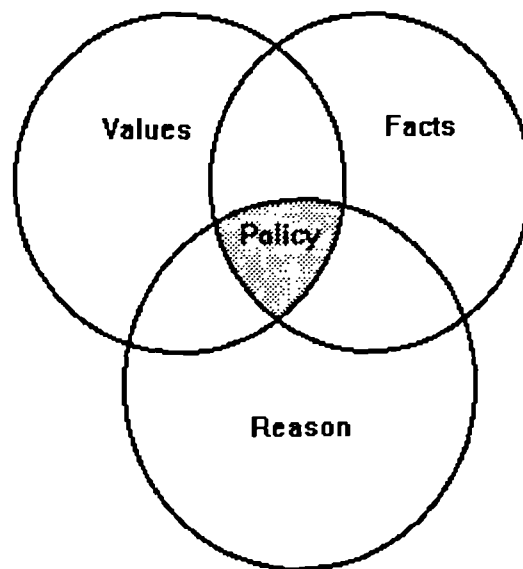
Instead, from a different and broader view, policy, in the present approach, is used to refer to an *interactive* social policy. Policy making is an interactive value-oriented process towards increasing human capacity, supporting and promoting cultural values, and solving the problems identified through a communicative action.

As Townsend (1975) emphasises, policy may exist as an implicit approach, embedded in people's culture and traditions, rather than formally appearing in policy statements. Through this continual interaction, between people and planners, and policy and action, people as agency organise regulations and manage resource flows, they interpret and manipulate policies through their actions (Barrett and Fudge 1981). At the same time, planners and decision makers attempt to "frame" the people's action while improving their (people's) knowledge, information and techniques to play a significant and effective role in the process of policy making. This can be a practical meaning of Giddens' structuration theory (Healey, 1997; also see Chapter 4).

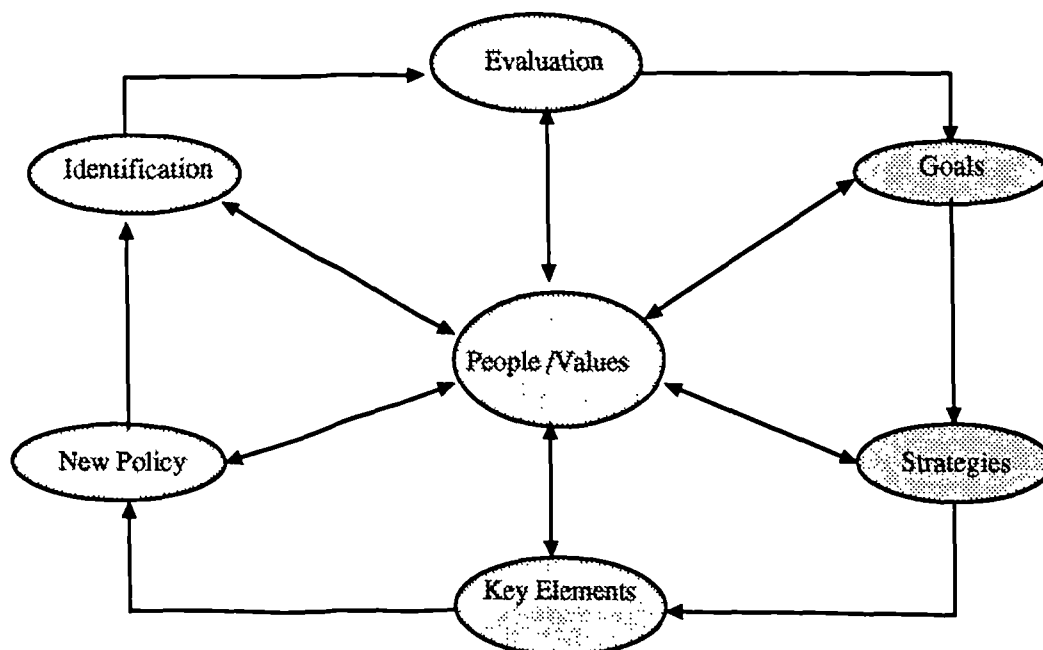
With this respect, many emphasise the significant role of people and their cultural values in the process of policy making. As Mel Webber (1978) argues, values are involved in policy as well as facts, and also values are located in people's

consciousness, not floating around as objective science. Further, values organise thinking about issues and indicate the extent and reasons for their validity. Thus, as discussed earlier, we should consider values seriously and bring them inside the policy process.

In a unified culture society, like MIS, values identify the goals, indicate the strategies and policies, and also evaluate the objectives, outcomes, implementations and the ways to achieve them. In the process of strategic policy making values and people are the means as well as the ends. This means that people and their values specify and influence the goals, while at the same time, such values and people are the driving force and resources to achieve the goals. In this process of policy making, politicians, and professionals are not the only responsible agencies. Instead, they are a part of a dynamic social effort to facilitate the participation of all parties and groups involved in plan and policy, in particular local residents. Overall, the policy is a result of dynamic interaction between facts (what “is”) values (what “should be”), and reason (identification and evaluation). This idea is simplified in Fig 5.6.

**Fig 5.6 The interaction of Facts, Values and Reason in Policy-Making**

Considering different issues in the policy-making process shows that these processes always consider the general modes of identification, goal formulation, and evaluation. This research emphasises a dynamic interaction between the main elements in the process of policy making (see Fig 5.7).

**Fig 5.7 The process of Policy Making**



As the model shows, the goals are derived from values, by not only the planners and politicians but also by people. In this way we need to identify and understand the problem, evaluate the existing policy, specify the goals, strategies and the key elements and finally make a new policy. The new policy leads to action and the new conditions are identified for evaluating the policy and initiating the new one. In the all of these steps, the official policy makers and planners participate in this process as people, like everyone else. This is a technical and intellectual interaction between people and planners.

It is important to emphasise that this process acts as a dynamic system. In other words, all factors involved in policy making are interconnected. They always influence each other and find new definition and role in the system. So, the policy cannot be restricted by imposing pre-set products, because if there were the case, the creative power of people and participants cannot flourish. In this way, our (planners) attempt is to make policy naturally, to create a whole whose parts are flexible and natural, an open-ended process for building a purposive system. Of course, in such a complex system, there has to be some sort of overall co-ordination control, as well as control of individual tasks (Islami, 1997).

## **Conclusion**

Having such a definition of the urban culture, explaining its important elements and their relationships with each other together with identifying the outcomes of such interactions lead us to examine the next task as developing policy implications.

It is hypothesised that cultural values of MIS people were, and for many remain, at the heart of their life and expression of their view of the world and history. Now, we face two major tasks: first, we need to show that this hypothesis is justified cultural cohesion rather than diversity in our proposed society. Second, we should demonstrate that people's values are not dependent to their socio-economic conditions. Rather there is some interdependency between cultural values, attitudes and socio-economic characteristics of people. The empirical work of this thesis aims to illustrate such relationships between different elements of urban life.

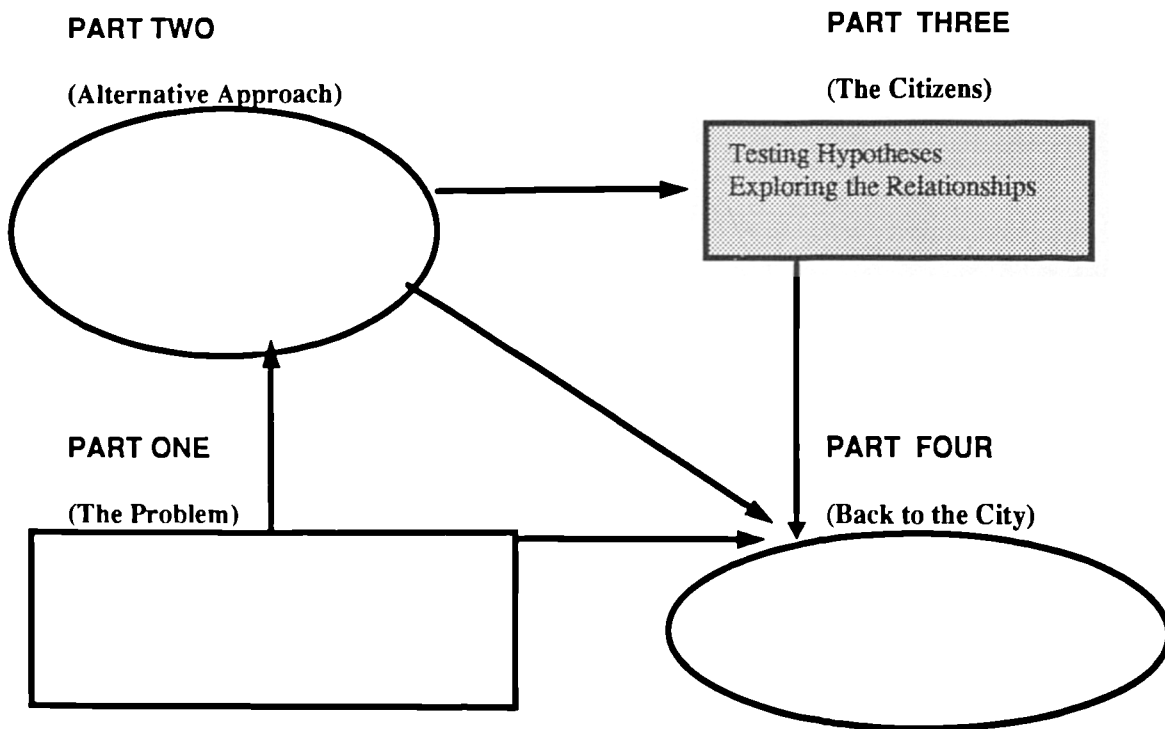
All such tasks are directly related to people as residents of the city. It means we have to start with people, because of the people-centred approach to the city and planning. With this in mind, the next two chapters attempt to identify measurable and operational indicators, together with an adequate scientific method to investigate

people's ideas and perceptions. Concerning the case study of this research, we need to go back to local residents of MIS, in order to: understand people's cultural values; clarify the role of their cultural values in their urban life, and; explore their perception concerning the city and their sense of "well being".

Thus the objectives of the empirical part of this study are:

- 1) To demonstrate the sustainability and unification of shared cultural values among the society
- 2) To explore the relationships between such values and other aspects of urban life

# PART 3



# 6

## **The Citizens** **PART ( I ) The Survey**

### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapters the theory and philosophy as well as the various dimensions of urban life were discussed. In both the approaches to planning and the city, culture is recognised as the basis of society and people as the centre of study. Subsequently, the research focused to illustrate the role of cultural values in urban regeneration. Through the discussion in the previous chapters, this broad objective has been narrowed down to two specific points of the extent of the unification of cultural values, in the case study area, and the relationship between different layers of people's culture and their socio-economic conditions. This means that investigating urban life, in this research, is based on people's beliefs, ideas, attitudes and in a word, upon their cultural values.

So, the empirical part of the research aims to discover the cultural situation as well as socio-economic conditions of MIS's residents, as a main source of the investigation towards planning public policy. Overall, through the present chapter and the following ones, we wish to show whether the case-study society has unified cultural values; and if so, how society can benefit from these as the driving force for both human and economic regeneration.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part clarifies the conceptual framework for the empirical study including hypotheses. The second part examines how the survey was designed and how the interviews proceeded. The third part of the chapter, through some initial descriptive statistics about the respondents, attempts to illustrate a general picture of socio-economic characteristics, as well as the attitudes and cultural values of the respondents.

## **6.1 The Conceptual Framework for the Empirical Study**

### **6.1.1 The Hypotheses**

Since the present study attempts to develop an alternative approach as a basis for policy development, it may be helpful to clarify our general ideas as hypotheses to be investigated through data analysis. The dimensions of such ideas can make data analysis and processing clear and more precise to understand and to interpret. Three main issues are investigated, in the case study area, through the current survey:

1. Cultural values of individuals are not built solely upon their socio-economic conditions. They are not necessarily different because of, and in accordance with, socio-economic differences.
2. The individuals' attitudes are affected by both their cultural values and their socio-economic conditions. But, the impact of cultural values on people's attitudes is stronger than the influence of their socio-economic conditions.
3. The lower layers of people's culture are more stable and common than the higher ones; i.e., the lower the layer the more stability and shared values.

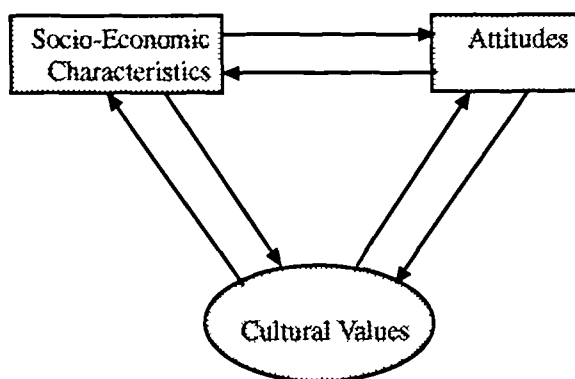
Indeed, this survey tries to indicate the role (how important) and the nature (unified or diverse) of cultural values among the society of MIS. Overall, the following major tasks had to be examined in order to test the above hypotheses through exploring opinions and quantitative data analysis.

- Demonstrating the relative independence of the deep layers of "cultural values" to "socio-economic" indicators.
- Illustrating the interrelationships between "cultural values" and "people's attitudes", as well as the socio-economic conditions of the citizens of MIS.

### 6.1.2 The Conceptual model for Choosing Indicators

According to the conceptual parts of this thesis “culture” is considered as a multi-layer structure in which each layer contains a particular set of values. The top layer is people’s attitudes, while traditional and religious values are placed in the middle and human values are situated in the lowest layer (see Chapter 5). In order to show this concept empirically and also to test our hypotheses, people’s culture is divided into two GENERAL layers. The first general layer is related to people’s attitudes called *Attitudes*, and the second one is concerned with people’s traditions and religious beliefs called *Values*. At the same time, the survey intends to illustrate the socio-economic characteristics of the owners of these values and attitudes. Overall, three groups of indicators are identified for data collecting and analysis. These groups of indicators are illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 6.1.

Fig 6.1 A Conceptual Model for Selecting Indicators



This general model illustrates both the classification of data and the relationships between the groups of indicators. According to the conceptual argument of this research, it would be very important and probably necessary to illustrate the relationship between these three groups of indicators. For instance, we wished to show: what are the differences between the cultural values of "low educated" and "high educated" people. And what are the differences between low income people's attitudes and high income ones'. Are such attitudes influenced by socio-economic status or cultural values? The results of such questions will help to understand the nature of respondents' points of view as the representatives of MIS people's cultural values, as well as the role of such values in shaping their attitudes.

In the earlier parts of this research, it has been emphasised that people's attitudes and orientation about the past, present and the future of their environment should be

understand and considered in the processes of urban policy and decision making. Thus, it was tried, in this survey, to explore what people think about their life, and to what extent, and how, such attitudes have been influenced by other factors of their lives. It was also aimed to choose some desirable variables to indicate both social and economic aspects of urban life efficiently. Such variables could be employed as multi-purpose indicators i.e. they have social, economic and cultural features. Employment, job opportunities in the past and the future, attitudes to women (mothers) working, and to establishing a new small business are the variables which have been selected to show the attitudes of the sampled population.

On the other hand, one of the main objectives of this research was to specify the role of "values" in people's life as a crucial parameter that should be considered in urban strategies. Cultural Values as a concept is not just a collection of individual preferences, as discussed in Chapter 5, but can be divided into a number of dimensions. As already mentioned, religious beliefs and behaviour in both personal and social aspects, particularly in a religious society like MIS, can be determined as a main part of the people's culture. Thus, two questions regarding the level of religiousness have been organised in order to measure such indicators. They were the "personal religious beliefs" and the "social religious customs" of respondents. Also, because of the significant role of marriage in family life, the most important criteria for choosing a partner has been used as another appropriate indicator for the measurement of cultural values. Traditional interests like music, names, tribal accent, dress and customs were also chosen to show the cultural values of individuals.

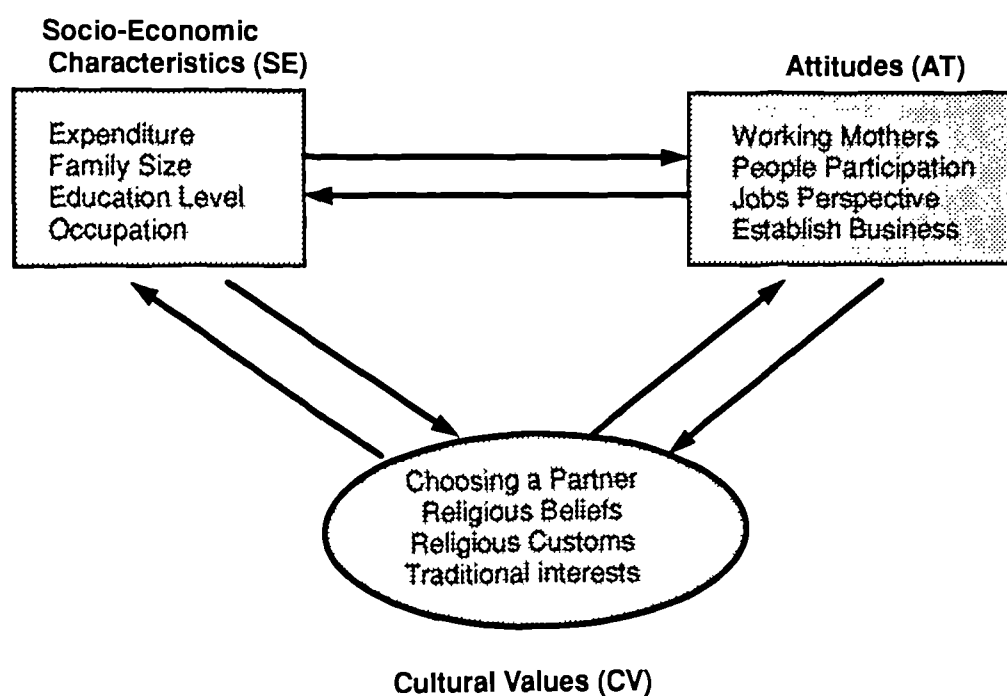
Overall, according to a general classification of data, the indicators were also categorised into three main groups: Socio-Economic characteristics (SE), Attitudes (AT), and Cultural Values (CV). The first group (SE) were those indicators which describe the social and economic characteristics of respondents. They were Age, Occupation, Education Level, Marital Status, Family Size and Monthly Expenditure.

The second group of indicators were related to the respondents' attitudes towards different aspects of their lives. These indicators are used to illustrate people's attitudes as the top layer of their culture. They were respondents' perceptions concerned with: "Working Women", "People Participation", "Job Opportunities Perspective", "Job Creation", "Role of Family to Establish a Small Business", etc.

The indicators of Cultural Values have been put into the third group. They are: Criteria for Choosing a Partner, Personal Religious Beliefs, Religious Customs and Traditional Interests. These indicators are employed to describe the middle layer of people's culture, which have already been categorised as religious and traditional

values. The structure of data analysis in the two next stages are based upon this hypothetical model. It was assumed that the results of the statistical analysis would enable us to elaborate such a model sufficiently for illustrating the relationship between these three dimensions of people's lives (Fig 6.1(A)).

Fig 6.1(A) The Indicators for CV, SE and AT



## 6.2 The Survey Design

To achieve the proposed objectives of the empirical part of the research, we chose a social survey method. Designing and conducting the survey needed an adequate consideration. This task was examined in several steps including: clarifying the research questions, developing indicators, designing the questionnaire, pilot study and multi-stage sampling. These steps are described in detail as follows:

### 6.2.1 Clarifying Research Questions

It is important to emphasise that the questions which appear here were not the same as the questions which initially had been designed for this research. Rather, the initial ones have been refined and new issues have emerged through review of the literature and as the research has progressed. For many, in the context of social science,



the elaboration of research questions is a process rather than an outcome (Honville, 1978; Jolliffe, 1986). However, the following points helped to focus the topic and elaborate the research questions:

1) The time frame of our interest is now (the time the survey was conducted). We have information on the existing residents, and but there is not much information about the past. Therefore, there are limits to exploring how values and attitudes have changed over time.

2) The geographical location of our interest is MIS, the case study area.

3) We want to clarify the role of values in people's lives through comparing and specifying patterns of cultural values among different subgroups. For example, we want to know the extent of individuals' commitment and obligation to their cultural values at different education or income levels.

4) The research is interested in the measurement of people's attitudes towards specific things to explore their perceptions of their urban life.

5) The plan is to clarify the relationships between people's attitudes and their cultural values leading to a demonstration of the relationships and interaction among various dimensions of urban life in a systematic perspective.

6) It is necessary to specify the unit from which we obtain information. The "household" has been selected as a unit of analysis. The head of household, as representative, is the unit whose characteristics we describe. In the Iranian context, household head will be the most involved in the various aspects of urban life in which research interested. The obvious disadvantage of this selection is that a great number of residents, mostly young people and women, are excluded, because, in the case study area, the head of household is normally the husband, rather than the wife.

### **6.2.2 Developing Indicators**

The process of moving from a broad concept to the specific point where we can construct a questionnaire is called developing indicators (Philips, 1976; Pedhazur and Schmelkin, 1996). Religion and traditions were recognised as the two main sources of people's cultural values, in MIS. So, these two dimensions were used as indicators of cultural values. Studying people's attitudes towards the social, economic, and political dimensions of urban life is specified as the second source of indicators. We needed then, to decide which indicators to use and how to word them.

Indicators need to be both *valid* and *reliable*. To increase reliability, the wording and the conditions of data collection were considered carefully. Also, employing multiple-item indicators helped us to increase the reliability of the survey. For validity, it was necessary to use words and expressions which would be interpreted in similar ways (Belson, 1986; Pawson and Tilley, 1997). It should be emphasised that both the concepts and methods which are used in this survey to identify and measure the indicators seem to cover the research questions. But it is not the only way. Rather this objective, can also be examined through other statistical methods such as the Cluster Analysis and the Factor Analysis.

### 6.2.3 Designing the Questionnaire

In most social investigation, data is collected by asking people questions. Such questions might be related to people's attitudes, their behaviour, and their socio-demographic characteristics as well as objects such as cars and houses (Jolliffe, 1986).

There are different methods of obtaining data through questions. Questions might be asked by interview (face to face or over the telephone). They can be given in written form either on paper where the respondent has to write answers (mail questionnaire ) or in written form by computer. In all of such methods, the questions should usually be drawn up in the form of a questionnaire.

It is unlikely, when using a questionnaire, to be possible to go back to the people and ask some things we need but forgot to ask. It is, therefore, very important to consider carefully all information we need to obtain and the relevant questions. The questionnaire should reflect both the conceptual base of the research and relate to the method of data analysis which will be employed. Hence, in order to make clear, unambiguous and useful questions, the following points were considered (Philips, 1976; Vaus D.A., 1996).

First, as the primary step, the content and form of the questions concerning the relevant theory or hypotheses should be considered. The suitable indicators should be identified and the questions which are used to measure such indicators should be produced. In other words, the questions should link to indicators. Some questions might be needed to explore the relationship between certain concepts (or variables). At this stage, it is also important to specify which method will be used for data analysis since in most cases the construction of the majority of the questions will be based on such a method of analysis.(Vaus D.A., 1996).

The second step relates to the composition and wording. The words to be used in building a question should be easy and clear, unambiguous and useful. In this regard the following points are commonly recommended:

- use simple language and popular clear words
- make clear questions as much as possible
- Avoid leading questions i.e. asking people in the way which can lead to a particular answer
- Consider general characteristics of the respondents, particularly the level of their knowledge, education as well as their values and customs in communication
- Avoid the use of questions which might influence respondents to show themselves in an acceptable social class (or status)

(Bradburn and Sudman, 1979; Schuman and Presser, 1981; Vaus D.A., 1996).

Third, the question format is another significant point. There are two main types of survey question, *closed* and *open-ended*. In the closed question a number of choices are provided and respondents are asked to choose one (or more answers). The advantages of this type are that on the one hand, quick and standard answers will be collected. This is easier for coding and analysis. On the other hand, in the case of people with limited education and with a low level of motivation and communication, it helps to produce an adequate response rate. Although this type of question will restrict the answers to a general idea for a particular question, an open choice, normally, such as "other, please specify" is considered to cover unanticipated choices. In "open-ended" question, respondents are free to formulate their own ideas in their own words. The answers of this type are probably quite wide, therefore, making grouping and analysis difficult.

A combination of both closed and open ended questions were selected in this survey. However, it was noted that answers to open questions needed to be grouped and categorised. A wide range of alternatives was essential to cover almost all possible answers. Hence, a pilot testing (see next section) was used to find the most common alternatives. Furthermore, an additional choice for closed questions as noted called "other (please specify)" was made to allow for unanticipated responses.

Since it was predicted that many people were at low level of education, there was also the risk of a low response rate and, due to shortage of time, the "face to face interview" was selected as a method of questionnaire filling.

Because of people's language, the questionnaire was translated into Persian, to facilitate communication and understanding.

The initial questionnaire contained 43 questions. It contained three main groups of questions. The first group of questions was related to the personal characteristics of respondents, such as age, sex, education level, marital status, occupation, size of family and so on. In the second group the questions were organised to explore respondents' attitudes towards various aspects of their lives, for instance:

- 1) What do you think about citizens participation in the future of MIS?
- 2) Do you agree with working women? Why?
- 3) What do you think about establishing new small business in the city?
- 4) What is the role of the extended family in finding a job in the city?
- 5) What is your perspective on the employment situation in the next few years?

In the third group, the questions regarding people's cultural and moral values were categorised. For instance, some of important questions in the third group were:

- 1) What is your criteria in choosing a marriage partner?
- 2) How often do you attend religious and traditional places?
- 3) Which kind of music, fashions, song, names would you prefer?
- 4) Would you care about religious and traditional customs? To what extent?

The linkage between such questions and the proposed indicators will be discussed later in this chapter.

#### **6.2.4 Pilot Study**

Generally, in social science surveys, the initial questions are "tested out" through a pilot study. Evidently, this part of the survey has a particular role in data collection. Indeed, a pilot study enables the researcher to have a deep empirical review of the questionnaire. It provides an opportunity for the surveyor to eliminate unreliable questions, repeated items, also to make obvious unclear and ambiguous points, to assess the ability of respondents to answer and the length of time the questionnaire takes to complete.

A pilot of this survey was conducted using ten local households, i.e., in MIS. Through the pilot study it was realised that some questions were not clear enough,

some of them were ambiguous and a few questions were irrelevant and unuseful. Also, the time required to answer was quite long. Hence, some questions were excluded, and some of them were reconstructed with new words and format. Overall, the questionnaire was finalised with 33 questions contained 9 open-ended and 24 closed questions (see appendix 2).

### 6.2.5 Sampling

A census is usually produced when all information from everyone in a target population has been obtained. Providing a census takes quite long time the costs are high and in many cases it is a difficult and uneconomic way of collecting information. Therefore, survey research commonly involves some kind of sampling. A sample is obtained by collecting data about some members of the population as representatives. It is very likely that there will be some differences between the sample and the population characteristics. Before explaining sampling method we need to consider the possible bias in the survey and the way to minimise it.

#### Biases

Where errors of the survey tends to go in one direction more than another we will have bias in our study. Although every empirical work has its own bias, in order to improve the reliability and validity of research, we should try to keep the bias on minimum. For instance, since mail surveys require reading and writing ability, rather than listening and speaking, it can introduce bias; so, we chose interview method. Lack of representativeness in the sample could be another source of bias. On the one hand we need to give equal chance to every individual as a member of the population to be selected for the sample, on the other hand due to the type and purpose of the question we need to find the best representative and also have a control over who completes the questionnaire.

However, in order to have a valid sample the "household" was chosen as the unit of analysis and the face-to-face interview was selected as the way of conducting the questionnaire (as noted). For some socio-cultural reasons in the area, the head of household was specified as a representative of the household and consequently as the respondent. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the head of household could introduce some bias in the survey.

### The Method of Sampling

There are some different types of sampling. The most important of them are: Simple Random Sampling, Systematic Sampling, Stratified Sampling and Multistage-Cluster Sampling (Jolliffe, 1986; Vaus D.A., 1996). Multistage-Cluster Sampling is the method that has been employed in this study. Using the multistage sampling method, the city was divided into seven districts geographically. Next, each district was divided into five blocks, and then, three random sample houses were drawn within each block through a sampling frame. i.e. writing down the names of all streets and the possible numbers of houses into two different baskets, then pulling the name of the street and the number of the house out within each block. Finally, 105 interviews were conducted in the case study area selected through this method.

### The Sample-Size

Two significant factors should be considered on identifying the required sample size: the degree of confidence we require and the extent to which there is variation in the population regarding the key characteristics of the survey (Moser and Kalton, 1971; de Vaus, 1996).

Considering the nature of the research, the 95 percent confidence level seems acceptable. On the other hand, since the survey had more than one purpose, and also we had no idea how people were going to answer the questions, a 50/50 choice was accepted as the percentage of population expected to give particular answer. That meant we did not impose any presumption in our sampling. Finally, 100 sample size was selected at the 95 per cent confidence and 10 percent acceptable error (Moser and Kalton, 1971). It should be noted that the population of MIS was 107000 in 1991; regarding 5.5 as the average family-size for MIS, the number of households was about 19450 (National Census, 1991).

In most social surveys, the first stage of data analysis is to produce a general idea about the respondents and the results. This aim is examined through descriptive statistics.

## **6.3 Descriptive Statistics**

Data analysis of this study is organised in three stages. This section, as the first stage, concentrates on frequency distributions of selected variables. It aims to describe how these variables are distributed in order to show the socio-demographic

characteristics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics could also be an introductory stage for later data analysis.

In order to illustrate a clear and general picture of what has been obtained, an efficient description of the results is necessary. This can be achieved by using frequency distributions. In this part of the data analysis, the answers of the respondents are considered, in the three groups of variables: socio-economic (SE), attitudes (AT) and cultural values (CV).

### 6.3.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics

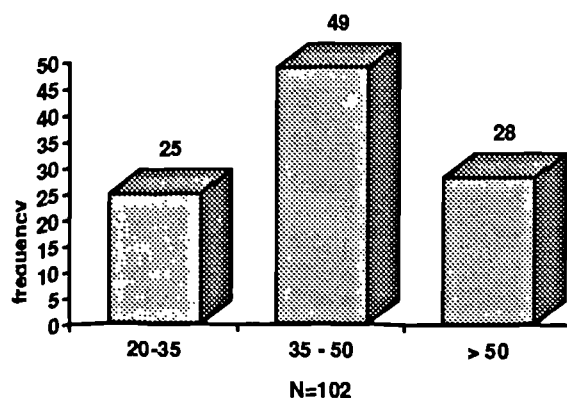
The social and demographic characteristics of people who have participated in the study play a crucial role in the research. Such information can facilitate a comprehensive perspective of the sampled population in particular, and the people who live in the case study area, dependent on the overall statistical reliability of the survey.

Overall, the following variables were selected in this group: age, education, occupation, marital status, family size, monthly expenditure, spending free time and holidays, place of birth, and tribe.

#### • Age Structure

Since the interviewees were the heads of households, the category of those under 20 years was excluded. Respondents were categorised into three main group: 20-35, 35-50, and >50. As Figure 6.2 shows that about 48 percent respondents were middle aged, i.e. between 35 and 50 years, while about 27 percent were older than 50, and only 25 percent were less than 35 years old.

Fig 6.2 Age Structure



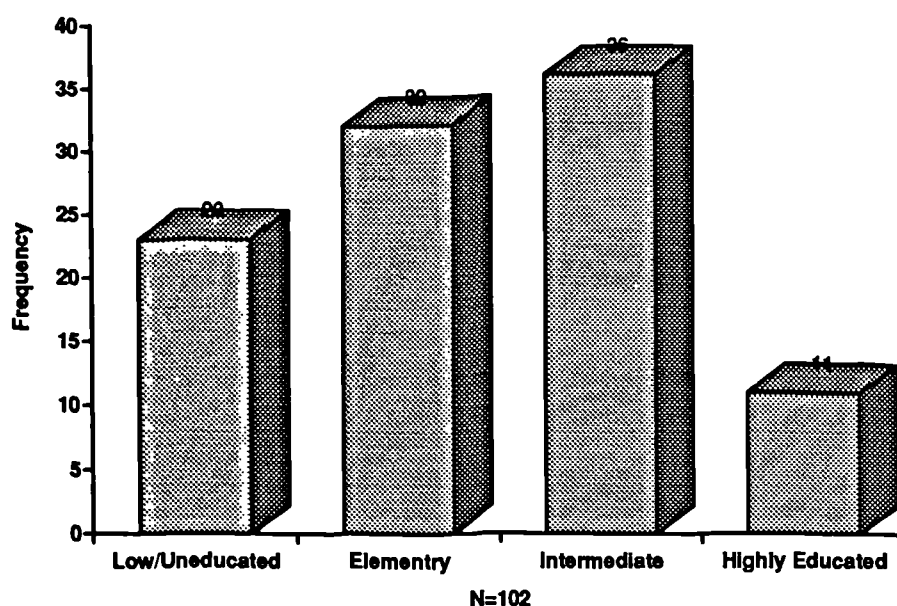
This figure gives the majority of respondents; i.e., about 73 percent, were between 20 and 50 years old. According to the last National Census, more than 62 percent of the population were younger than 20, 23 percent were between 20 and 35, only 9.8 percent were between 35 and 50, and 10 percent were older than 50 (National Census, 1991). These figures may support Rust's theory which claim that in declining cities the younger and better-educated people will leave the city, and those older than 45 and those in school age will remain in the city (see Chapter 3).

#### • Education Level

In most social survey, the level of education of respondents is used to show the capability and potential of the sampled population.

The respondents' education level, in this study was divided into four categories: Low and Uneducated (less than 3 years school attendance), Elementary (3-6 years), Intermediate (6-12 years) and highly graduated (more than 12 years) (Fig 6.3).

Fig 6.3 Education Level



As Figure 6.3 shows that 35.3 per cent the sampled population were in the intermediate education level. About 11 percent were highly educated, and more than 31 percent had elementary qualifications. In comparison with other Iranian cities, for many years the education level of MIS's people has been higher than the average of this figure at the national level. In 1995 the average of the educated population (with more than 5 years schooling) was about 82 percent, while this figure for the national average was

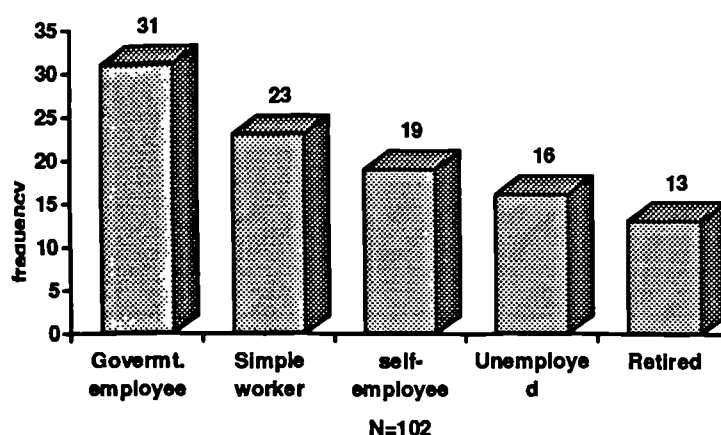


about 78 percent. (The Plan and Budget Organisation of Iran, 1995; also see Chapter 8). This is a key point that should be considered as one of the main sources of human capacity in the city.

### • Occupation

In this survey, heads of households was categorised into six main groups: Simple manual worker, Government employee, Self-employee, Unemployed or Retired, and Other. Because of the presumed interrelationship between education, work and family, occupational status can be used as a significant indicator to show social economic and cultural spheres in which the family live. Figure 6.4 illustrates the types and frequencies of these occupations.

Fig 6.4 Occupation

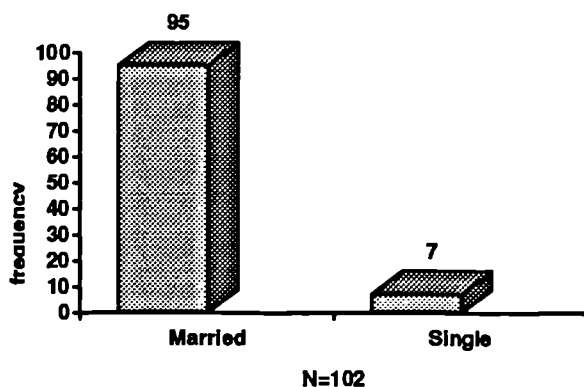


As the figure shows one third of respondents were government employees. This demonstrates the dominant presence of the public sector in the city which is mostly concentrated on the service sector. The actual rate of unemployment in the city was more than 30 percent (see Chapters 2 and 8). This shows that occupational status of sample population are unlike the whole city residents. This probably means many unemployed were those young people who did not establish a family and consequently were not the head of household. Also the actual rate of government employees in the city, in 1986, was about 67 per cent, and 18 percent for self employed citizens (National Census, 1986). It should be noted that most retired are the ex-government employees and some simple-workers were also employed by the public sectors.

### •Marital Status

As already noted, the head of household was selected as the unit of analysis. It was expected that most respondents were married. Fig. 6.5 shows the results of this indicator. The single respondents were defined as individuals who had not got married yet and lived in a separate unit from their family.

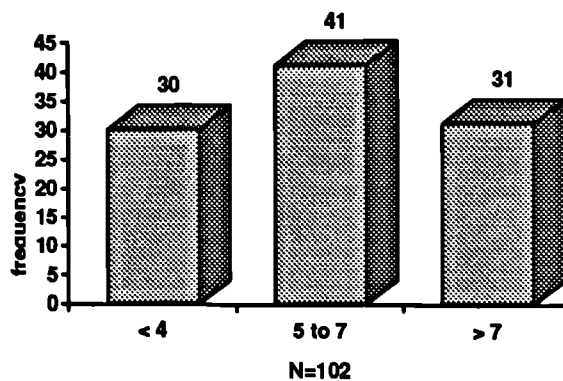
Fig 6.5 Marital Status



### • The Family Size

To illustrate a clear picture of the family and its function, it is important to know how many people live with each other as a household. People were asked how many people live with them as their own family. For the purpose of this question, family was detailed as a nuclear family containing parents and children. The results show that the most common size of households was between five to seven (41%) (Fig. 6.6).

Fig 6.6 The Size of Family



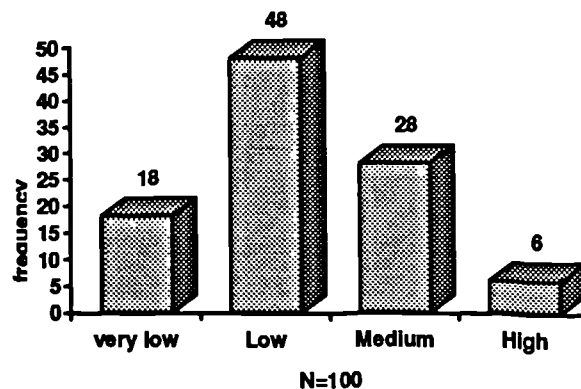
According the latest formal data, the average size of family in MIS is 5.5 (National Census, 1991); that is close to our findings in which the average size of family is 6.2.

### • Monthly Expenditure

As most social and economic investigators believe, it is very difficult to determine the real amount of people's income. Thus, the monthly expenditure usually is used as a reasonable indicator of income and probably consumption level costs.

Respondents, in this survey are grouped into four categories as follows: 150,000-240,000 Rials, 250,000-340,000 Rials, 350,000-500,000 Rials, and more than 500,000 Rials. As an economic indicator, the *Deprivation Line*, is the minimum amount of monthly expenditure which is required for the provision of basic needs including: food, clothing, accommodation, and medical health in the national level., At the date of survey, this figure was 350,000 Rials (The Iranian Plan & Budget Department, 1991).

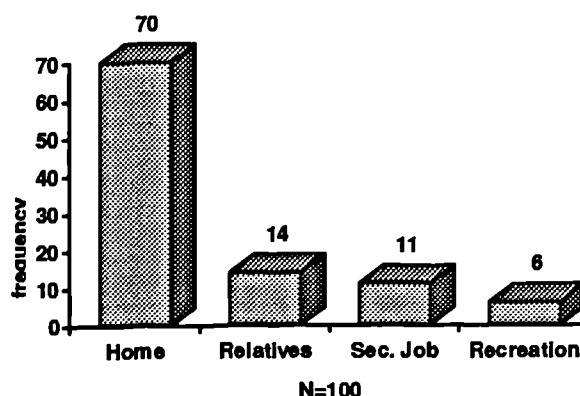
Fig 6.7 Monthly Expenditure



The findings shows that 66 percent of MIS people live with less than a minimum level of monthly expenditure for households at the national level. This reflects clearly the material deprivation associated with the economic decline of MIS.

### • Free time

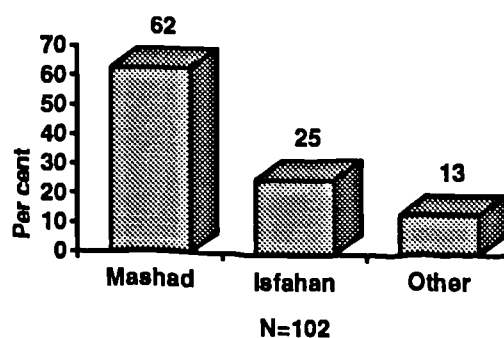
Spending free time is one of the main activities of urban life. In MIS, we intended to explore what people normally do during such time. This figure can also indicate what is important for people after necessities.

**Fig 6.8 How do you spend your free time?**

As the findings show, the majority of respondents spend their free time at home with their families. The next figure is visiting relatives. It can be said that most respondents would like to spend their free time with their own families and relatives. Or, there are no adequate recreational facilities, in the city, for spending their free time, as the lowest figure shows. Furthermore, the low figure for second job may demonstrate that although most respondents did not have sufficient income, because of lack of adequate job opportunity, they had no chance to get a second job. This emphasises the very great importance of family in social life in MIS.

- **Holidays**

How to spend holiday and vacation time was another point that was considered. According to their features and functions, cities, and places within them, have specific positions and meanings for societies. In the case study area, Mash'had, as one of the biggest cities of Iran, has a very high holy and religious position. For a long time, visiting Mash'had was an aspiration of any Iranian, particularly the religious people. In this question, I intended to investigate whether this religious position still remained or not.

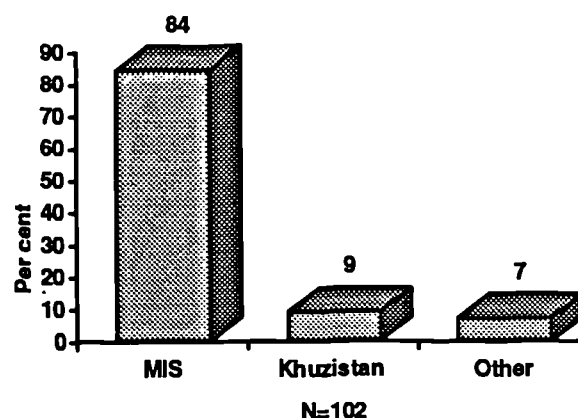
**Fig 6.9 If you find a holiday opportunity which city do you wish to go to?**

As the Figure 6.9 indicates, visiting and pilgrimage to the religious city of Mash'had still had its specific position among the respondents. About 62 per cent of respondents wished to go to Mash'had on holiday, if they could. Isfahan as the most interesting historic and tourist city of Iran, as well as the nearest to MIS, was in the second place, with 25 per cent. As for going to other parts of Iran, only 13 per cent were interested.

- **Place of birth and the length of being resident in MIS**

The place of birth among most Iranians, and perhaps other nations, is of great significance for people's emotional feelings of identity. Most feel they belong to the city where they were born, and the city belongs to them. Commonly, many people, who do not live in their home city, wish to return to their city after they die. In this question we wanted to understand how many respondents were born in MIS, and how many were immigrants. Regarding the development period of the oil industry, the figures show that most existing residents of MIS either were born in MIS, or many years ago, have moved to the city (see Chapter 2).

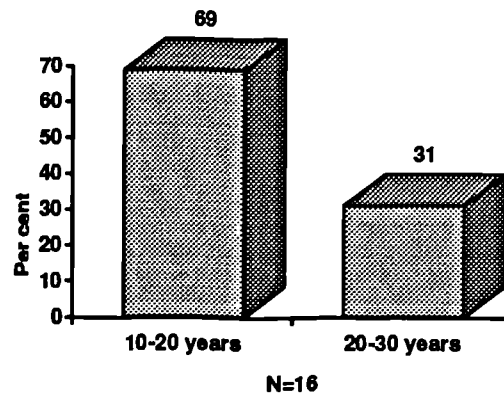
**Fig 6.10 Where were you born?**



As figures 6.10 and 6.11 show, about 84 per cent of respondents were born in MIS. Nine percent came to the city from other parts of the Khuzistan region, 7 percent came from other parts of the country. Looking at the next question, we can see that, of the 16 per cent of immigrants in the sampled population who had come to MIS, most had moved to MIS more than ten years ago. While, 69 percent moved between 10 and 20 years ago, and 31 per cent more than 20 years ago. This may suggest that firstly, the

rate of immigrants to the city is very low, and secondly more recent immigrants have not formed households, and so not in the survey.

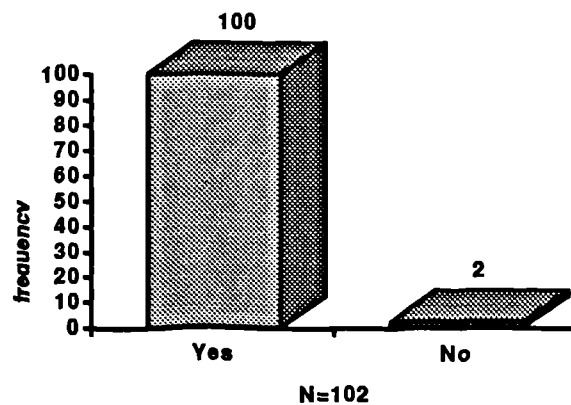
**Fig 6.11 If you were not born in MIS, when have you moved in MIS?**



- **The Bakhtiari tribe**

As we explained in the second chapter of this study, the majority of MIS's people belong to the Bakhtiari tribe, one of the most ancient tribes of Iran. The Bakhtiari tribe, like most tribes around the world, have their own traditions and customs. They speak with their own accent, wear traditional dress and play and hear their traditional music. Through a few questions, we wanted to understand first how many of the respondents belonged to the Bakhtiari tribe; and then, to explore to what extent they were interested in their traditions (see Chapters 2 and 8).

**Fig 6.12 Are you from Bakhtiari tribe?**



The results show that from 102 interviewees, 100 people belonged to the Bakhtiari tribe and only 2 people did not. Even the people who were born outside of MIS, were mostly Bakhtiari, and suggest that the kinship network and tribal relations caused them to come to MIS.

- **General Perspective**

As a summary of the socio-economic characteristics of the citizens of MIS it can be said that:

The respondents were relatively “middle aged”. They were relatively educated people, the average attendance at school was 8 years. While the average size of the nuclear family was high, more than 6 people, the unemployment rate was not high (about 16 percent). However, it should be noted that according to the existing documents, the average of unemployment rate in the city was about 30 percent (Zista, 1992). The respondents were mostly born in MIS, or immigrated to the city several years ago, in the period of the development of the oil industry, after the Islamic revolution and during the War period. Almost all of respondents belonged to the Bakhtiari tribe.

Now, we are going to measure the attitudes of these people towards various aspects of their lives, as the second group of derived variables.

### **6.3.2 Attitudes**

The following description focuses on people's attitudes towards their urban lives. It was presumed that all such information would facilitate a general understanding of people's everyday lives which are interconnected with their socio-economic conditions and their cultural values as well. In this section people's attitudes about school or home, job creation, job opportunity, the role of family in job opportunity, establishing a small business, working mothers, urban problems, people's participation, satisfaction with MIS, moving out from MIS, public policies, occupational capabilities, and education improvement.

- **School or Home?**

This variable was to clarify the role of the family and the education system in producing a healthy generation as well as to show the connection between the two. So, people were asked to compare school and home and to say which one was more important in children rearing.

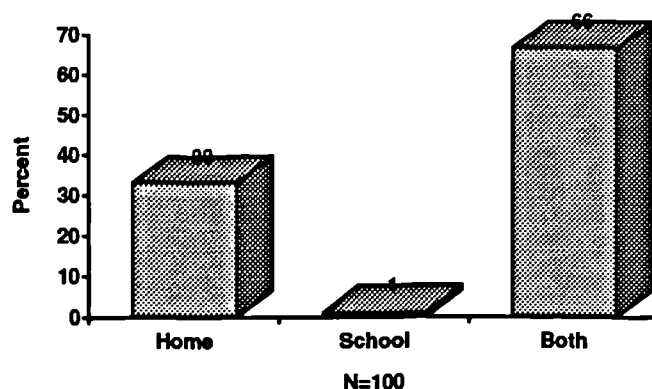
Q. In your opinion which one of the following choices has the most important contribution to child rearing?

A) Home

B) School

C) Both

**Fig 6.13 School or Home?**



As Figure 6.13 shows, more than 66 percent answered "both" together, where about 33 percent believed "home" was more important and only one percent preferred "school".

This figure shows that the majority of the respondents believed that both home and family had a crucial role in children rearing. It can be said that, for MIS residents, the family environment is significantly connected to the education system and content. The respondents did not believe that child rearing is possible at home alone, in the absence of school, or vice versa. So understanding and managing both together for an effective and consistent influence on individual and social lives is a sensitive task.

#### • Job Creation

To understand people's opinion about the employment situation in the city, people were asked to declare their opinion about "job creation" in the city during the last three years.

Q. What do you think about the conditions of finding a job during the last 3 years (since 1992)?

A) Improved

B) No changes

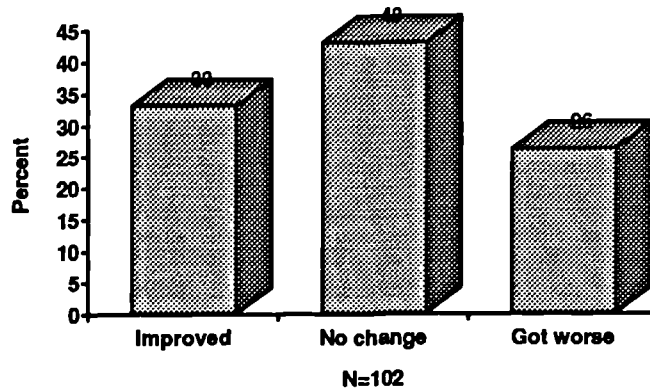
C) Got worse

According to the results, summarised in Figure 6.14, about 43 percent of the respondents believed that there had been "no change". 26 percent, accepted it had "got



worse", and 33 percent agreed that it has "improved". It is interesting that, despite all the difficulties, nearly a third of respondents thought job creation had improved.

**Fig 6.14 Job Creation**



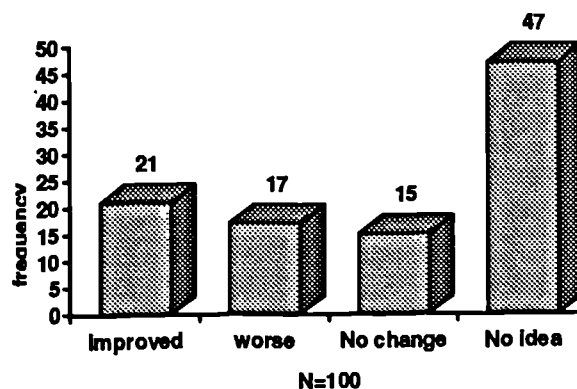
#### • Job Opportunity Perspective

To explore people's attitudes towards the future of MIS, they were asked:

Q. What do you think about the future of the job opportunities situation in the city, for the next three years?

- A) will be improved
- B) "won't be changed"
- C) "will get worse"
- D) no idea

**Fig 6.15 Job Opportunity Perspective**



As Figure 6.15 shows, about 47 percent had "No Idea", about 21 percent believed that it "will improve", 15 percent accepted "won't change" and 17 percent agreed it "will get worse".

### • The Role of Family in Job Opportunity

To explore the respondents' ideas about the relationships between job finding and the family and the potential positive role of the extended family in this regard, people were asked:

Q. What is your idea about this comment: People with extended families and relatives can find a job much easier than others?

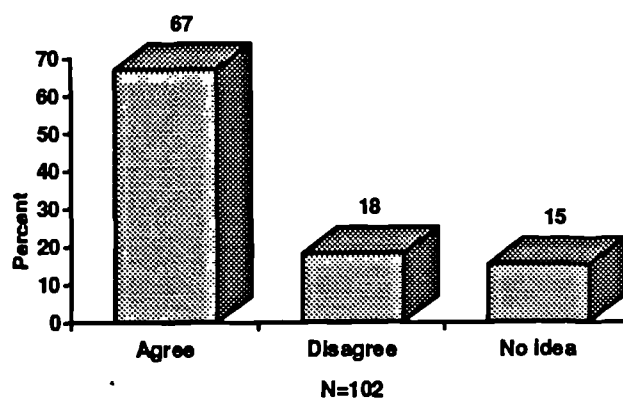
A) Agree

B) Disagree

C) No idea

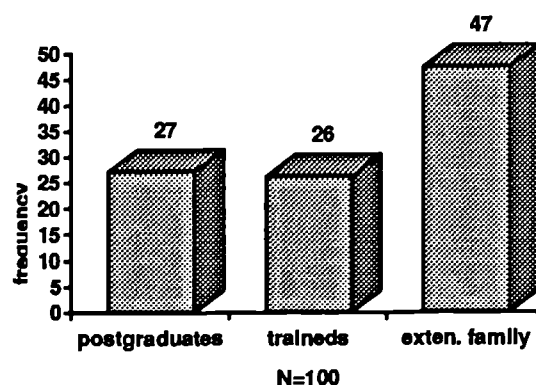
Most respondents i.e. more than 67 percent agreed with the effective role of the family in facilitating finding a job more easily. Less than 18 percent believed that the family had no important role in this regard and the rest of the respondents, 15 percent, had no idea (Figure 6.16)

Fig 6.16 The Role of Family in Jobs Findings



This question, together with the next one, has a significant role in showing the strong interrelationship between the social and economic structure of life. The role of family and kinship in this regard should be considered carefully.

To explore the significant factors in job finding in the city, people were asked:

**Fig 6.17 In your view, what is the most important factor in finding a job in MIS?**

The findings indicate that most respondents, more than 47 percent, believed that the role of extended families and tribal relations is the most significant factor in finding a job. In the views of the household heads, postgraduates and people who held a training course certificate also had more chances in the job market. In tribal societies like MIS, the clan, as a subdivision of tribe, is treated as a large extended family.

#### • Establishing a Small Business

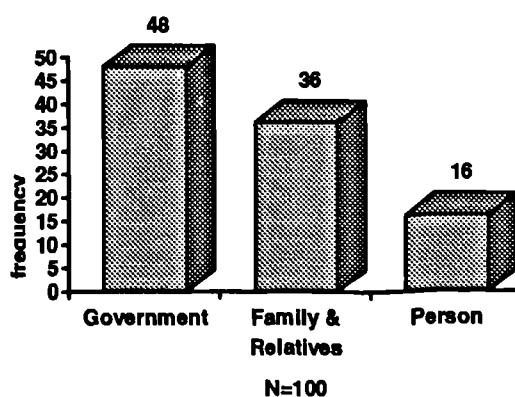
Small businesses were initially considered as a possible economic opportunity to change the socio-economic conditions of the city. So, understanding residents' ideas on this issue could be useful for understanding the potential for solving urban economic problems and providing alternative solutions. Again, the role of network relations and family is emphasised in this question.

Q. In your opinion, what is the most important factor in starting up a small business?

A) The Government

B) The Family

C) The person

**Fig 6.18 The most important factor in starting up a small business**

As the findings show, the majority of the respondents (48 percent) believed that government was the most significant driving force in establishing a small business. Perhaps such views can be the results of their experience of the intervention of the oil company and the government in their lives, in the past. The role of family and kinship was the second important factor for the respondents, with 36 percent. They believed that in case of the availability of family and kinship supports, the establishment of a small business was quite possible. Only 16 percent agreed that the person himself is the most important factor. The findings show that most people expect external factors to generate a force for establishing a small business. It may also be said that the role of social relations and values (such as feeling responsibility toward other people to help them and also expect their help) in this regard is important. These two significant points will be considered later in this research.

#### • Working Women (Mothers)

The issue of working women has been considered in a wide range of social and economic literature. On the one hand the role of women as work-force and their right, equal to men's, in building their future have been emphasised. On the other hand the sensitive and important role of women as mothers in child rearing emphasises the importance of women's contribution in social life. Understanding how the household heads of MIS think about this issue could help to know them better and explore the relationships between different aspects of urban life through their viewpoints. Another aim of this question was to explore whether or not "work" can be assumed as a multi-functional variable in urban life. Work as an economic factor can also indicate the social and cultural characteristics of people's life.

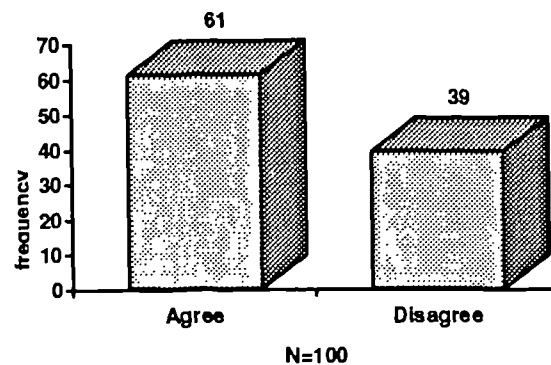
Q. Do you agree with working women (mothers)? Why?

A) Agree

B) Disagree

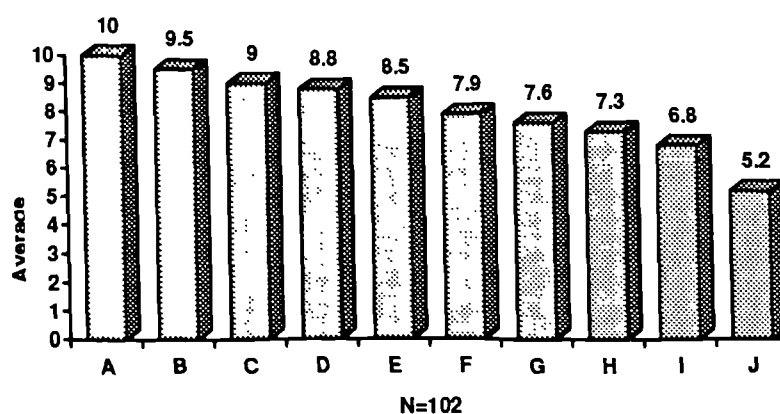
About 39 percent of respondents disagreed and more than 61 percent agreed (Figure 6.19). The reasons for agreements or disagreements will be considered in the later part of this section.

Fig 6.19 Working Women



Now, we wanted to know how the respondents thought about the urban problems of MIS. This can indicate their immediate needs. Considering the results of the pilot study, reviewing existing published reports and talking with the residents, we outlined the ten most important and common urban problems and asked respondents to rank them. To have a comparative picture, we gave a weight for each rank for instance the weight for the first choice was 10, the weight of the second choice was nine, etc. These weighted choices were then aggregated to find the average value for each variable. The results are shown in Fig 6. 20.

Fig. 6.20 In your opinion, which urban problems are the most important in the existing situation of MIS?



A = Drinking Water	B = Healthy Environment	C = Unemployment	D = Housing
E = Living Cost	F = Education	G = Recreation Area	H = Training
I = Transportation	J = Crime		

As the results show, for the respondents, the most important problem of MIS, was the water supply system. Because of the hazards of natural gas leaks in the city, a healthy environment was considered as the second important problem. Unemployment

was in the third place, and then the others were noted. The rank of crime in this figure should be considered carefully. It seems that although unemployment and deprivation is dominant in the city, crime was not a major problem for the respondents. This suggest that strong social relations and community networks in the city can be one of the reasons for this situation. This is a major contrast with the perception of most contemporary western cities.

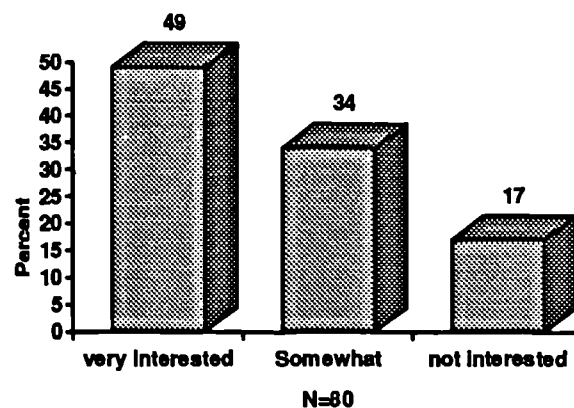
### • People's Participation

Regarding the role of people in building their future and following the concept of human capacity building, the notion of participation has been considered as a key point in the process and implementation of planning and urban policy. Thus, people of MIS were asked to express their opinion in relation to "people participation", to resolve their city problems and in order to improve the conditions of their urban lives.

Q. Do you think, the residents of MIS would like to participate in public planning and policies?

More than 49 percent believed that local people were "very interested", about 34 percent said people were "somewhat" interested and only 17 percent believed that people were "not interested" in participation.

Fig 6.21 People Participation Perspective



The results show that. the majority are hopeful about people's participation as an essential part of urban development. Overall, this figure may show the residents' high potential to participate in the planning and urban policies. This could be a valuable resource for the city.

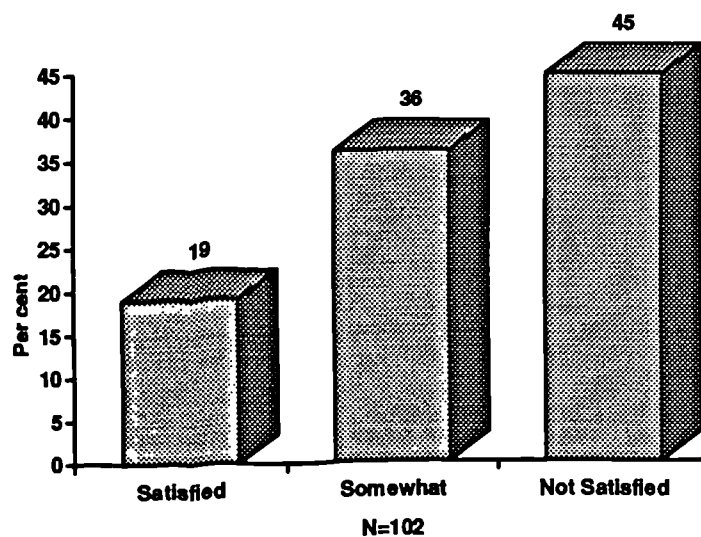
- **Satisfaction with MIS**

As a general concept the extent of satisfaction with living in the city can show a picture of residents' feelings about the existing situation and their perspectives on the future.

Q. Are you satisfied with living in MIS?

According to the results obtained which have been summarised in Figure 6.22, only 19 percent of respondents were satisfied, while 45 percent were not satisfied and about 36 percent were "Somewhat" satisfied.

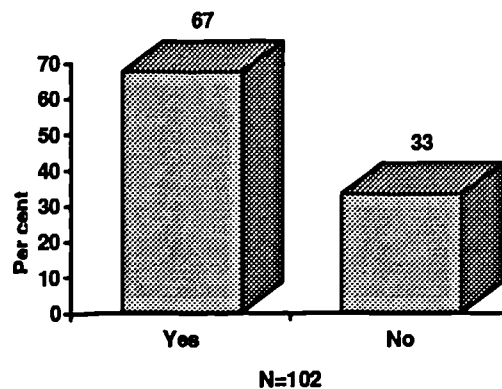
**Fig 6.22 Satisfaction with MIS**



The results show that only 45% of MIS people as presented by the sampled population were not satisfied with living there. Considering Figure 6.20, it can be said that people are as much worried about the environmental problems as the economic ones. This means that urban decline is probably not the only reason for this dissatisfaction.

- **Moving out from MIS**

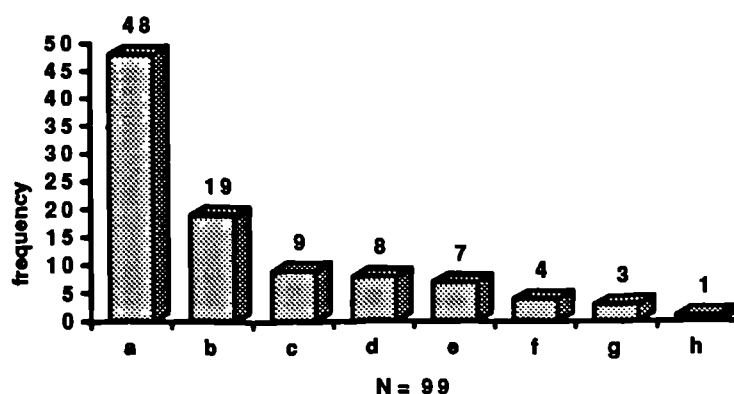
As a common occurrence for cities in decline, people try to move to somewhere else for better opportunities. It was important to know the viewpoint of the respondents as the representatives of MIS people on this issue.

**Fig 6.23 Do you wish to move out from MIS?**

As the findings demonstrate, about 67 per cent of respondents wished to move from MIS. At the same time 33 per cent emphasised that they would never leave MIS. Theoretically, those who want to move probably are the more affluent and better educated, this could be a problem for the city (see Chapter 3, Rust's zero-growth model).

- **Best public policies**

As one of the open-ended questions of this survey, we tried to explore people's attitudes towards public policies for tackling urban problems. This helps to clarify the extent of people's information as well as their expectations.

**Fig 6.24 What is the best public policy, from your viewpoint, to tackle economic problems of MIS?**

- a= governmental help to establish a small business
- b= establish a big factory as the replacement of the Oil industry
- c= establish training centres for small business
- d= long period mortgages for small business
- f= providing raw material for small business with low price (subsidised)
- g= supporting domestic industries such as animal breeding and farming
- h= do nothing

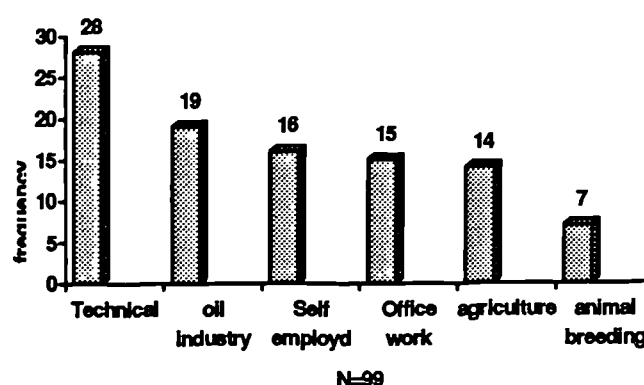


As the results show, almost all people were looking for and expecting government support which emphasised the establishment of small businesses. It demonstrates that the residents of MIS feel confident and capable to run a small business, but they need some support.

- **Occupational capabilities**

To explore the range and varieties of interested occupations and capabilities of people, the respondents were asked to indicate which occupation they would be able to be involved in.

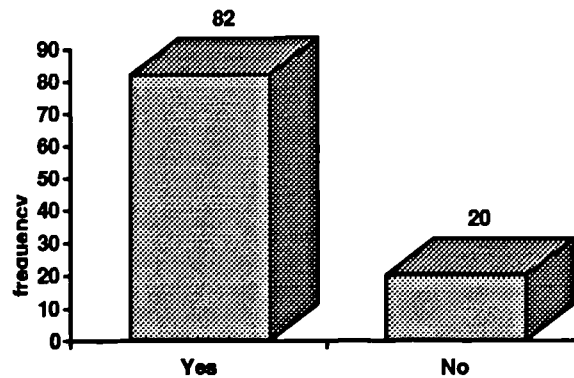
**Fig 6.25 In which of the following occupation are you capable to be involved?**



As the figure shows, the majority of respondents said they were capable to participate in technical and engineering activities (28%). The oil industry still has an important position in the city and almost one fifth of people said they would be able to be involved in it. After these, 16 percent of the respondents said they were capable of self employment, and 15 percent in office work (more public) and 14 percent in agriculture. There is a good potential and natural resources in the area; the Bakhtiari tribe were originally breeders, but animal breeding was at the end of the table with only 7 percent, perhaps due to the lack of information and qualifications.

- **Education Improvement**

In many societies education level plays an important role in individuals' lives. We intended to explore this figure in MIS. So, the question was:

**Fig 6.27 Do you wish to improve your academic education level?**

The results in Fig 6.27 demonstrate that education and a high level of qualification are very important in MIS. The respondents liked to continue their study as much as possible. Because, as the first reason, educated people, in the Iranian society, are more respected and important, even more trustworthy than others. Secondly, educated people have a greater chance for obtaining a good job. Overall, the education level in MIS, is part of their cultural values. If we look at the criteria for choosing a partner, in the next section, education has been placed just after morality and family background and before income and tribe position.

As a summary conclusion of this part of study, it can be said that people retain many traditional attitudes, but also have a positive perception to some modern aspects of urban life. This is a combination of modern and traditional life style which reflects MIS's history. Also there is a potential in respondents' attitudes such as family ties, tribal relations, loving their home-city, which can be regarded as the resources of human capacity for regeneration.

### **6.3. 3 Cultural Values**

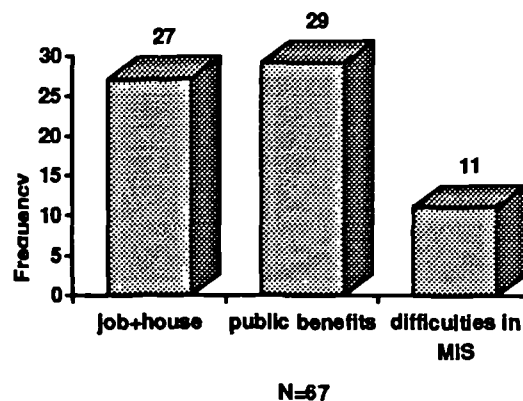
The third group of questions considered people's cultural values. Together with our understanding of culture as containing different layers, the search for indicators of the socio-cultural backgrounds of the residents of MIS led to a focus on humanity, religion and traditions as the three significant sources of people's cultural values.

We put a few basic questions to explore the extent of commitment to some values which taken to represent the respondents' obligations of basic human values (see Chapter 5). For instance, do you feel an obligation to support young or deprived people?

In relation to religion, a number of questions were included in the data set in order to show both public and private religious practice and belief, as well as commitment and the role of religion in people's lives. In exploring traditional interests, a set of questions regarding customs and cultural traditions such as language (local accent), traditional music and songs, names and dressing were put in the survey to explore people's cultural values which are based on their traditional interests.

As the starting point of this section, it was found useful to know the respondents' reasons for wanting to leave the city. This was asked to those who planned to leave; there were 67 such people.

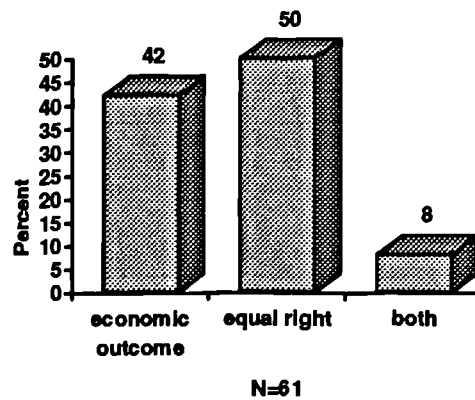
**Fig 6.28 Why do you wish to leave MIS?**



The result of this question shows that interviewees decided to move from MIS for some economic and material benefits. It seems that whilst most of the respondents were born in MIS, had strong local ties and loved their city very much, economic needs forced them to take such a decision. This may mean that economic needs can affect some cultural values among society.

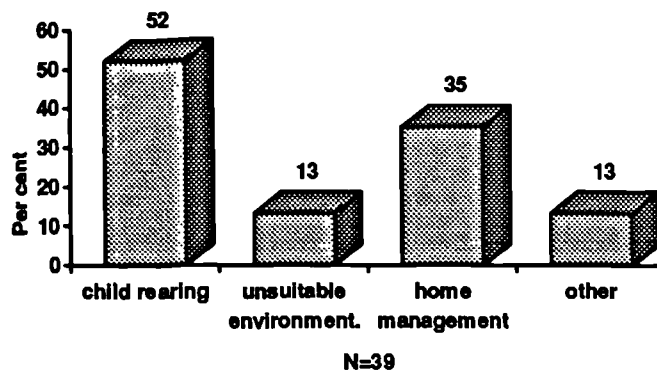
- **Working Women (Mothers)**

We wanted to know the reasons for the high rate of agreement with the idea of working women.

**Fig 6.29 Why do you agree with working women?**

The findings shows that one half of people who agreed with working women believed that there should be equal rights for men and women in society, while about 42 per cent expressed economic benefits as the reason.

In contrast, of the 39 heads of household who disagreed with working women, the reasons were focused on child rearing (52%) and home management (35%), while 13 per cent of respondents emphasised the bad environment of work (Fig. 6.30).

**Fig 6.30 Why do you disagree with working women?**

Figures 6.29 and 6.30 show the strong connection between family, work and economic outcomes. Commonly child rearing as a value was present in the respondents' attitudes. This means that people were making judgement in the light of family commitment, moral values (equal rights, about 30; child rearing, abot 19) as well as economic needs and working conditions.

### • Religious Customs

There are some customs in the area which are based on religious beliefs. Such cultural values in most cases control and direct social relations. For example, the obligation to participate in religious events, the tribal and family celebrations and ceremonies has a significant role in social relations in MIS. In traditional societies such customs are part of people's lives rather than just social obligations that they have to perform. These customs can help to maintain social relations, and also give people access to knowledge and opportunity. So, the interviewees were asked to what extent did they care to contribute in such customs and social events.

Q. Would you like to participate in religious occasions, funeral and wedding parties in your city?

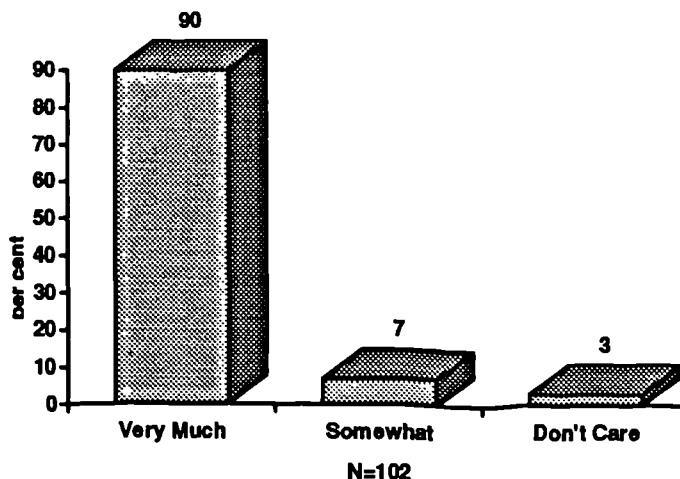
A) Very much

B) Some what

C) Don't like to

As the results show, more than 90 percent are interested "very much". About 7 percent "somewhat" and only 3 percent "don't participate" (Figure 6.31).

Fig 6.31 Commitment to Religious Customs



The position of such customs among MIS society may suggest that the contribution in such social events is not just for enjoyment, but it can also be a matter of value and belief.

### • Traditions

As outlined, traditions still have strong impacts on the lives of MIS's citizens. Through four similar questions, we tried to obtain a general picture of the extent of respondents' interest in their traditions. They are traditional dress, tribal accent, traditional music and tribal names.

Q. Which kind of dress-wear do you like more?

- A) Traditional dress      B) Both      C) Modern (western)

Q. Which kind of music do you like more?

- A) Traditional tribal      B) National      C) Modern (western)

Q. How often do you speak with your tribal accent?

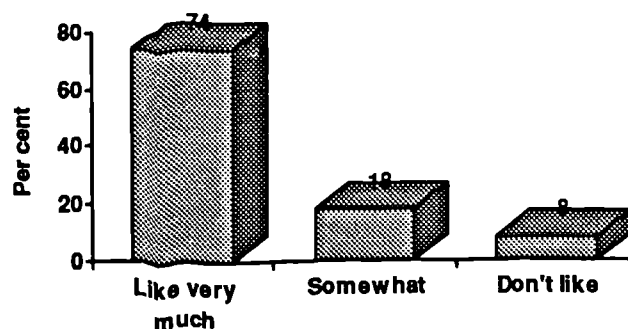
- A) Very often      B) Sometimes      C) Seldom

Q. Which kind of names would you like more to choose for your children?

- A) Religious      B) Ancient Persian      C) Modern

Exploring the results of each of these four questions gave some figures for traditions. In order to show a general picture of respondents' traditional interests, a specific weight was given to every choice, in the form of Traditional (A)=3, National (B)=2 and Modern (C) (western) =1. Then the average weight for each choice was calculated. We combined the results of the four and obtained a new figure to show the average extent of respondents' interests in their traditions. Finally, the answers were given new codes such as: "Very Much", "Some how" and "Don't like". As Figure 7.18 shows, most responses were concentrated in the "very much" category i.e. more than 73 percent. About 18 percent were "somewhat" interested and only 8.5 percent "didn't like" the traditions.

Fig 6.32 Traditional Interests

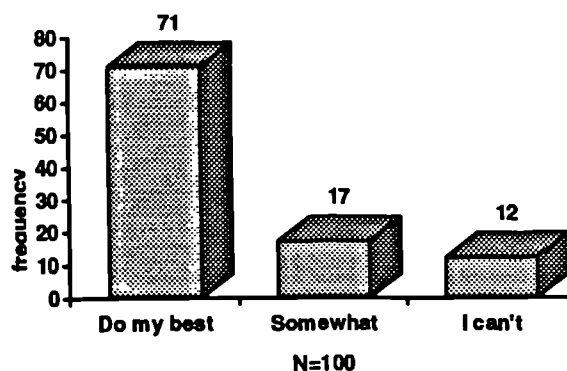


The overall results of these group of questions show that despite the impacts of Westernisation in the past, the present residents of MIS like their cultural and religious traditions very much and this plays a significant role in their attitudes toward urban life. More precise data analysis can elaborate such a significant role (see Chapter 8).

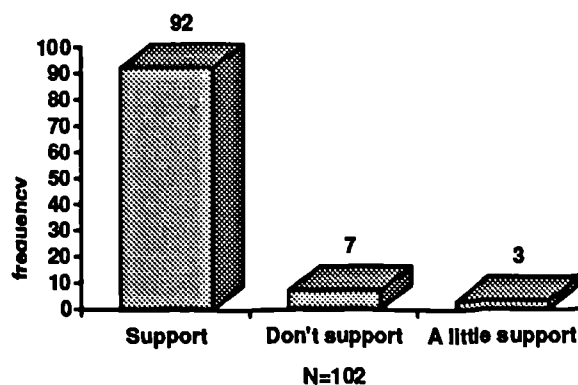
#### • Religious Beliefs and Moral Values

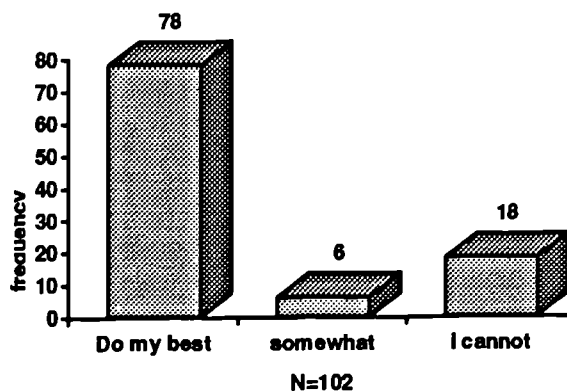
Personal religious beliefs also can clarify the extent of the existence of values in individuals' lives. Willingness to give voluntary aid and donations have been known as familiar moral values in most societies. Particularly, in a society like MIS, such moral values are based on religious beliefs. Thus, understanding individuals' ideas about this notion can indicate how far he/she is committed to moral values.

**Fig 6.33 Do you have time or money to spend in volunteer aid and charitable activities?**

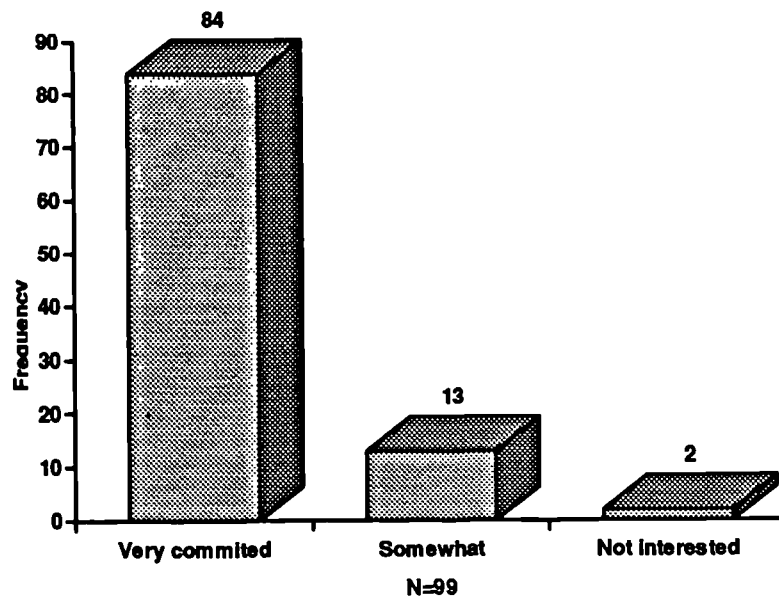


**Fig 6.34 Do you feel any obligation to support young people and relatives (in economic aspects), or it is better to leave them by themselves?**



**Fig 6.35 To what extent do you wish to help young people and relatives?**

Through a combination of answers to these questions we tried to indicate how far respondents care about moral and religious values. The results showed that more than 84 percent answered "do my best", about 13 percent said "somewhat contributed" and only 2 percent replied "not interested" (Figure 6.36).

**Fig 6.36 Religious Beliefs and Moral Values**

These results suggest that moral and religious values still have an important position in residents' lives. They feel responsibility towards each others and would like to help. This is a great resource of human capacity which can be employed in urban regeneration.



### • Choosing a partner

It can be said that "getting married" (or choosing a partner) is one of the most important decisions for people during their life, particularly in the case study area because people normally get married just once in their life. The official documents support this idea. According to the existing data, in MIS, for every 25 official marriages there is only one official divorce; i.e. the rate of official divorce is very low (Iran's National census, 1995). This figure can demonstrate two important points. First, the structure of the family in the area is very stable and strong. Second, marriage has got a value position while divorce is less socially acceptable within the society.

Thus, it seemed to me that this question concerning choosing a partner could be useful to clarify people's values. In this question people were asked which criteria were more important for them in choosing a partner.

Q. Could you please rank the following criteria as the most important criteria in choosing a partner from your viewpoint.

- A) Religious & Morality      B)Income      C)Education Level  
D)Family Background      E)Tribe      F)Other criteria.

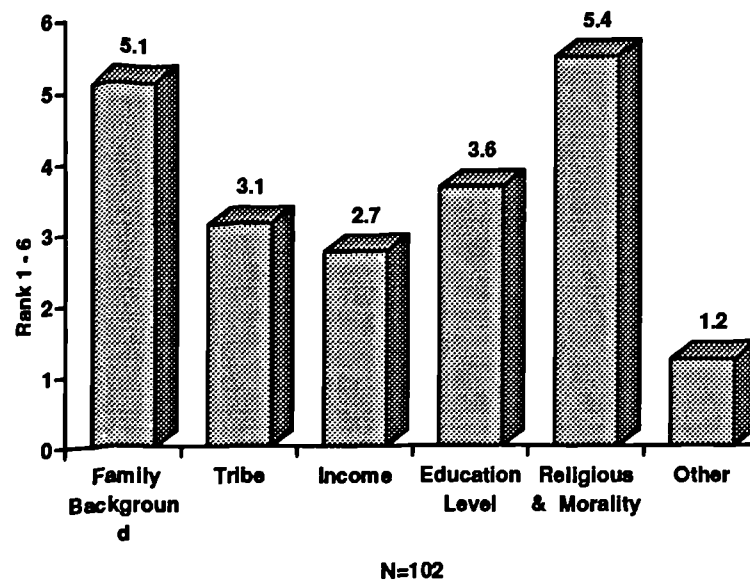
In order to measure this figure adequately, the average weight of every criteria has been calculated. It means that firstly a weight has given to every rank for instance rank 1= 6, rank 2= 5,...and rank 5= 2. After that the average weight for each criteria has been calculated from the sum of multiplication of the frequency of each rank by its weight. For example, if the result for income is:

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6
Weight	6	5	4	3	2	1
Freq.	0	4	12	24	42	0

$$Av = \sum W(i) \times F(i) / \sum F(i) \quad W = \text{Weight}, F = \text{frequency}$$

$$Av = (6 \times 0 + 5 \times 4 + 4 \times 12 + 3 \times 24 + 2 \times 42) / 82 = 2.7$$

The results are summarised in Fig 6.37.

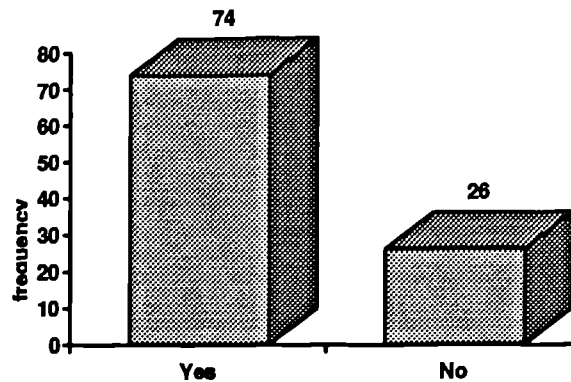
**Fig 6.37 Criteria for Choosing a Spouse**

The results of this question show that religious and morality was the first criterion for respondents in choosing a partner. After that, family situation and background has a significant position. This means that the family establishment in MIS is based on cultural and moral values of the people. Even when respondents refer to family background it seems that they consider the cultural values and morality among that family rather than a utilitarian viewpoint which mostly emphasises the education and income for happiness of mankind.

- **Consultation**

One of the common sorts of relationships between close friends and family members is consultation. Of course, consultation is a suitable means of communication and exchange of information, ideas and opinions. The extent of consultation between the members of a society can show the extent of social ties and trust in the society. In traditional societies like MIS, consultation with others, particularly with elders to get advice and in many cases to solve problems is a key feature of social life. We asked the following question to explore this idea among respondents.

**Fig 6.39 Do you normally consult others, especially elders, in your major decision making?**



The results show a large number of respondents, (3 of 4) consulted elders. It might be said that the place of consultation within the respondents' social lives was still significant and a good social relations between the MIS's people can be assumed.

## 6.4 Summary and Discussion

At the end of this stage of analysis, a summary of findings clarifies the material obtained and also how more data analysis required. Through this survey we understood that:

1. The household heads in the survey as the representatives of MIS's residents, are relatively educated, relatively middle aged, with low rate of income and a large family size as well as a high unemployment rate.

2. Through investigating respondents' attitudes towards the various aspects of their lives, it became clear, according to the majority views, that:

- A) They think there is a strong connection between family structure (home) and education system (school) in child rearing.

- B) Most of them believe that the situation of finding jobs in MIS has not really been improved since three years ago and the future prospect is neither clear nor hopeful. At the same time, the majority of respondents accept that the role of family, kin and social relations is important in finding a job or in establishing a new small business. They mostly agree with the idea of working women, for the reasons of equal rights to men as

well as economic benefits. This view was counterbalanced by those who emphasised the importance of mothers in child rearing and family administration.

C) Whilst the majority believe that the residents would like to participate in building the future of MIS, the rate of satisfaction with living in MIS is low.

3) Through studying respondents' cultural and moral values it was understood that:

Traditions and religion (Islam) have significant roles in people's lives. MIS residents like, and live, with their cultural and moral values derived from their religion or traditions. They mostly feel commitment and obligation to support and consider religious and traditional values. They show that they feel responsibility towards other people rather than their individual preferences. Overall, it can be said that firstly, their traditions and cultural values have a great contribution in their urban lives. And secondly, because of the same cultural and religious background the cultural values among the respondents are unified and stable.

This stage of the survey showed some facts and information about the people involved in the survey, but generalising such findings to the residents of MIS needs more consideration. We require to show what is the interrelationship between the attitudes, cultural values and socio-economic conditions of respondents. The next chapter deals with how these objectives have been analysed.

# 7

## **The Citizens**

### **Part (II): Data Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

The main questions of this study focused upon the issue of inter-relationships among socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the target population. For example what is the relationship between the education level and religious beliefs of the respondents? How do traditional customs and economic needs affect people's criteria in choosing a partner?

Searching for an adequate method for analysing such data, at the earlier stage of this research, led to questions about the appropriate method for elaborating such interpretations, either qualitative or quantitative. The answer to these questions involved a careful clarification of the research strategy and questions as well as research into the methodology. According to the research proposal, our analysis required both explanation and exploration together at the same time. In other words, it was necessary to have an analysis that would explain and demonstrate the measurable assumptions via some scientific quantitative techniques. Also a qualitative approach was required to explore and understand causes, consequences and interactions of unmeasurable variables which are not dependent upon numbers and statistical models.

The method, therefore, used in this research for data analysis is a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. This chapter deals with the quantitative and the next chapter concerns qualitative analysis. Overall, as already mentioned, the present study attempts to show, in the case study area:

- 1) There are different cultural layers in which the lower layers are more common and stable.

- 2) people's attitudes are linked to deeper cultural layers, rather than their socio-economic conditions, and
- 3) There is a unifying (relatively) cultural base in MIS.

In the last chapter, descriptive statistics summarised the responses derived from a sample population, mostly based on frequency distributions. Through such descriptive analysis we outlined some of the socio-economic characteristics, attitudes and cultural values of the people in the survey. But we need some more precise analysis to explore the interrelationships among the different variables.

This chapter aims to employ statistical techniques for measuring the interrelationships between two or more variables as well as showing to what extent the results can be applied to the population of MIS as a whole. The chapter proceeds in three sections. The chapter begins with a general explanation about the characteristics and limitations of our data. The Second section examines the interrelationships between pairs of variables. In section Three, some interrelationships among more than two variables are explored, through multiple regression analysis. Section four, multi dimensional scaling method is employed to discover the relationships between selected variables more precisely. Finally, the results of data analysis will be discussed.

## 7.1 The Characteristics of the Data

The number of variables involved in almost all of the questions is more than two. It means that a cross-tabulation or other bivariate analysis was insufficient to produce the findings. Therefore, some appropriate multi-variate analysis had to be employed. Finding the most suitable analytical method requires a good clarification of the nature and characteristics of variables we have got. The answers had already been categorised in different ways. For example "Age" was categorised for year groups 20-35, 35-50, and >50. They were *interval* data, while the extent of satisfaction with MIS was categorised into "satisfied", "no difference" and "unsatisfied". These were *ordinal* data, and the variables such as gender, city of birth and marital status were *nominal* data. As can be understood from these three categorised variables, we can rank ordinal and interval variables. However, this is not possible for nominal ones. We can also specify the differences between categories numerically only for interval variables (de Vaus, 1996). The questionnaire also included a few yes/no questions.

According to the specification of the data and the nature of the research questions, three main general methods have been employed for exploring, explaining and measuring relationships. First, *Bivariate Analysis* is used to determine the

relationships between two variables. Second, *Multiple Regression* is employed to explain and measure the relationships between more than two variables. And, finally Multi dimensional Scaling is used to explore the relationship between groups of variables. But, before starting analysis, we are required to treat (prepare) the data first.

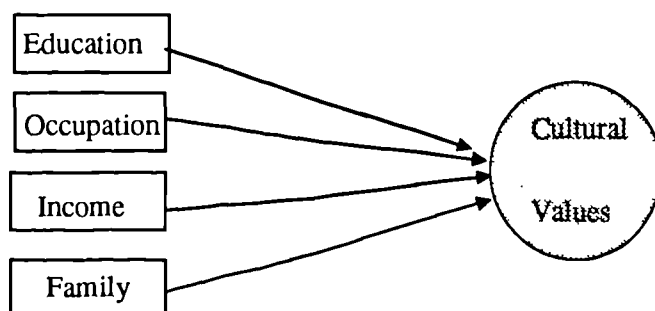
About 60 variables were derived from the initial analysis of the responses. Still, they were too many to be analysed; so the most important and appropriate variables had to be selected. The decision to exclude some variables and keep the important ones was examined in two stages. Firstly the variables with high rate of missing values (no answer) were eliminated. Excluding variables with a high rate of missing value gave us some 48 variables. These variables were described in the preceding chapter (some of them were combined with others). Now, we are required to select a smaller set of variables for precise statistical analysis.

### Data Treatment

The empirical part of research aims to explore whether people's cultural values, in the case study area, are unified or diverse. In other words, we want to demonstrate that people's values, in the case study area, are very close and quite similar to each other. If this is so, then it provides support to the argument that cultural values do not depend on people's socio-economic conditions. Also, we intend to show that cultural values shape people's attitudes through education, income, occupation and family structure; i.e., a combination of cultural values and socio-economic condition shape people's attitudes.

A) The variables used to test the first hypothesis divided into two main groups: the independent variables (education, occupation, income and family) and the dependent variables (cultural values). The hypothetical relationship is illustrated in Fig 7.1.

**Fig 7.1 The conceptual relationship between people's cultural values and their socio-economic conditions**



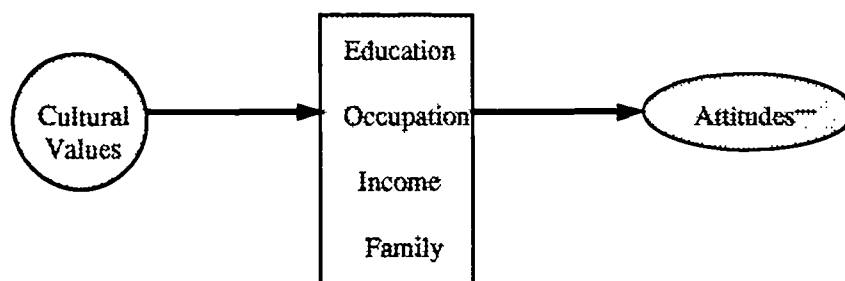
Cultural value is a concept that can be specified in a number of dimensions. As already explained, religion and traditions have been recognised as the main sources of cultural values in this study (see Chapter 5).

Overall, four variables were considered adequate for the purpose of illustrating respondents' cultural values, which seemed to be based on their religion and traditions. They were:

1. The role of values in choosing a partner
2. Religious beliefs
3. Traditional interests: a combination of customs, dress, names and music
4. Obligations and commitment to religious and tribal customs

B) The variables that were used in the second hypothesis can be divided into three main groups: measures of the dependent variables (attitudes), measures of the independent variables (cultural values) and measures of the intervening and background variables, education, occupation, income, and family (Fig 7.2).

**Fig. 7.2 The conceptual relationship between people's cultural values, their socio-economic conditions and their attitudes**



Considering people's attitudes towards different aspects of their life can lead the researcher to find out how people think about the city, what are their wishes and their expectations. In this study, we selected six variables to show the respondent's attitudes toward different objects. These were their ideas about:

1. The job opportunity perspective
2. The role of the family in job finding
3. Working women (mothers)
4. Satisfaction with MIS
5. The small business opportunity; and
6. People's participation in public policies



## Preparing the variables for analysis

Having selected the variables, it was necessary to reduce the number of variables to a manageable number, simplifying the form in which they were presented so that the analysis and presentation of results could be simplified. The preparation of the measures of cultural values involved a number of stages. The initial preparation of the variables was relatively straightforward. It simply involved constructing composite variables or excluding the variables with many missing data. This task has already been examined in the first step of descriptive analysis (see Chapter 6).

## Producing the Scales

The first task was to ensure that each item was scored in the same direction both so that the scores on the scales could be compared and so that the items within each of the scales could be combined in the first place. It was decided that all variables should be coded so that a high score indicated a person with a high respect to cultural values (for example) while a low score showed less respect and commitment to cultural values. Because some of the selected items initially indicated a low code for a high respect, they needed to be reverse coded.

The second step was to decide about missing data. Since the rate of missing data in the survey was very low (less than 5%), it was decided to substitute the mean of the variable for missing data. To do this we first needed to obtain the mean of each variable then re-code the variable to substitute the mean for the missing data.

The third step was to ensure that each of the items in the scale had an equal contribution to the final scale score. One way is to re-express the raw score. This was accomplished using the following transformation for each item on the scale:

$$\text{Newitem} = (\text{Olditem} - X) / s$$

where,

$X$  = the Mean of the untransformed item

$s$  = the Standard Deviation of the untransformed item

In order to have a useful general picture of all selected variables to guide the researcher as well as providing important information that was required for later analysis, the means of variables for the new categorical scales were calculated.

The results of such initial descriptive analysis are summarised in Table 7.1

**Table 7.1 Variables, Definition and Means**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Education	High=3, Medium=2 , Low levels=1	<b>1.9</b>
Income	High=3, Medium=2 , Low levels=1	<b>1.4</b>
Occupation	public=4, comerce= 3, s-worker=2, unem.& retd.=1	<b>2.6</b>
family-size	>7=3, 6-4=2, <4=1	<b>2.1</b>
job-creation	improved=2, no idea=1, got worse=0	<b>0.9</b>
family&job oport.	effective=2, no idea=1, ineffective=0	<b>1.5</b>
working-women	Agree=1, Disagree=0	<b>0.6</b>
people-partic.	very interested=2, somewhat=1, not-interested=0	<b>1.2</b>
Satisfaction	satisfied=2, somewhat=1, not-satisfied=0	<b>0.74</b>
Religs. beliefs	commitment=2, somewhat=1, no-commitment=0	<b>1.82</b>
Religs.customs	commitment=2, somewhat=1, no-commitment=0	<b>1.87</b>
morality&values in choosing partner	very important=2, important=1, unimportant=0	<b>1.8</b>
Traditions	like very much=2, somewhat=1, don't like=0	<b>1.65</b>

To explore whether a unified culture existed in the society of MIS or not required an answer to the question of whether socio-economic conditions differences influenced the cultural values of individuals. The questions of cultural values and attitudes were in fact measured at only the ordinal level. The first decision to make was how to analyse the data in order to answer to this question. There are a great number of ideas and methods about how such data should be treated.

This part of the data analysis, as noted, intends to explore and calculate the extent of association and correlation (if any) between the variables of three different groups which were socio-economic characteristics (SE), attitudes (AT), and cultural values (CV). In the first step, the extent and the reliability of the relationships will be examined, through bivariate analysis using the Cross-tabulation technique and statistical tests.

## **7.2 Bivariate Analysis**

The main objective of finding a relationship between two variables is to assist in the task of explanation. For instance, it can be detected that people vary in their attitude about a particular subject. Furthermore, the relationships between two variables are

crucial because they can assess a hypothesis about such relationships and the way in which the data are examined.

Overall, having relationships between pairs of variables was the first and fundamental step after univariate analysis. Through such relationships the following questions can be answered.

1. What are the cross-frequencies between each pair of variables?
2. How strong are the relationships?
3. To what extent can such relationships be generalised among the society from which the sample was derived?

Cross-tabulation analysis was the technique used to answer the first question. Other statistical techniques such as Chi-Square and Fisher exact tests were employed to answer the next two questions, but for the relationship between two variables only. Multi-regression analysis techniques was used to explain the relationships between more than two variables.

### **Cross-tabulation Analysis**

"Crosstabulation" has been recognised as a fundamental technique to explore the joint frequencies between two variables.

Indeed, through Crosstabulation analysis it can be found out how variable X varies in the presence of variable Y. This figure can be derived from a crosstabulation between the frequencies of variables for all cases. Then, the results would be displayed in a table. However, to understand the cause and effect relationship, the extent of effectiveness, and where there are multiple interrelated causes, this technique is not efficient. Two variables are associated, if the distribution of values on one variable differs for different values of the other. Crosstabulation techniques compare frequencies of all different values of variable one with variable two, for all cases. The results show how these two groups of values are distributed.

The results of Crosstabulation become both unreliable and difficult to interpret if the variables have too many categories. Thus, it was necessary to collapse variables with too many values. This task has been done in the last stage. Accordingly, almost all of the scales were reduced to the three categories.

Test of significance and the correlation coefficient are the two important explanatory statistical parameters which are calculated through statistics and mathematics formulae.

### Test of Significance and Measure of Association

Tests of significance are used to work out which interpretation is most likely (de Vaus, 1996). In other words they simply show how likely is any existing relationship to occur in the population from which the sample is drawn. Regarding the type of data and number of cases, there are various techniques to calculate the significance test, such as Chi-square, Likelihood-ratio chi-square, Mental-Haenszel chi-square and Fisher Exact tests etc.

We did not use Chi-square, because in almost all cross-tabulation results, the number of co-frequencies cells with counts less than 5 was very high. Thus chi-square was not be a valid test. The Fisher-exact test was recognised as the most appropriate test for this purpose, because the data were ordinal and the sample size was not so large (102). The number of the Fisher exact test changes between 0 and 1. The less the amount of F, the more significant the reliability of the survey. This means the Fisher exact test will show us which inter-relationships are statistically valid ( de Vaua, 1996).

In addition, describing the strength and direction (negative or positive) of the association between variables is essential for elaborating bivariate relationships. Different tests and techniques have been developed to measure the existing association between the variables. Choosing the most appropriate test needs considerable attention to their criteria, limitations, and specifications. Considering the type of the data (Categorical), and the size of the table produced by cross-tabulation (more than 2x2), the Gamma statistic was chosen as a test of measurement of association. The number of Gamma varies between -1 and 1, the higher amount of Gamma, the more association between variables.

In the first stage of bivariate analysis, through SAS (Statistical Analysis System, SAS/stat, 1993), a specific program was run for this purpose. The results of the Crosstabulation analysis and statistical tests between every pair of variables have been summarised in the tables. For example, Table 7.2 shows the results for education level and religious beliefs.

**Table 7.2 The Crosstabulation analysis between Education and Religious Beliefs**

	complete commitment	moderate Commitment	No commitment	Total
Low/uneducated	19	3	0	22
Elementary	27	5	0	32
Educated	28	6	1	35
High Educated	10	0	1	11
Total	84	14	2	100
Statistics	DF	Value	Prob	
Chi - Square	6	5.968	<b>0.427</b>	
Fisher's Exact Test			<b>0.482</b>	
Gamma			<b>0.15</b>	

As the results of this bivariate analysis show, there is no significant association between these two variables; i.e. the distribution of the complete commitment in religious beliefs is very close to the distribution of educational level of respondents. This means that from 22 percent of low/uneducated people, 19 per cent were highly committed; i.e., about 86 percent. For the intermediate education level, 27 people out of 32 were highly commitment; i.e., about 84 percent. From 35 educated people, 28 were highly commitment; i.e., 80 percent. And finally, 10 people out of 11 high educated people were highly committed, about 90 percent. Although there is little difference in the level of commitment for different education level, such a difference is not significant enough to conclude that there is a statistically valid association between the people's education level and their religious beliefs. This suggests that respondents' cultural values based on their religion are very similar and there is little variation in the variables. Such values are not dependant on the education level of individuals and do not change with changing education level.

Such an analysis was examined for all selected variables and the results are summarised in the Tables 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5.

**Table 7.3 The association between Socio-economics & Cultural Values**

	Relig/partn		Relig/blif		Traditions		Relig/custm	
	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
Occupation	.47	-.15	.43	-.12	<u>.06</u>	<u>.48</u>	.24	.26
Monthly Exp.	<u>.09</u>	<u>.53</u>	.79	-.21	.51	-.30	.44	-.58
Educat. Level	.48	-.47	.48	.15	.47	.13	<u>.05</u>	<u>.60</u>
Family Size	<u>.02</u>	<u>.49</u>	.53	-.10	.59	-.04	.25	-.47

General Composite Association,  $F = 0.32$

As table 7.3 shows, there are some meaningful relationships between socio-economic characteristics of individuals and their cultural values. The results of exact Fisher test shows that a relatively reasonable association between occupation and traditional interests ( $F=.06$ ,  $G=.48$ ), between monthly expenditure and choosing religious partner ( $F=.09$ ,  $G=.53$ ), between education level and religious customs ( $F=.05$ ,  $G=.60$ ), and between family size and choosing a religious partner ( $F=.02$ ,  $G=.49$ ). The associations between others seems moderate in three cases and weak for the rest. Also, considering Gamma, it can be said that most results have relatively low significance and reliability.

It should be noted that due to the importance of  $F$ , we considered those high  $G$  whose associated  $F$  were also significant. For example, in the relationship between Monthly Expenditure and Religious Custom, although  $G$  is relatively high ( $-.58$ ), we ignore it because of the very low value of  $F$  ( $0.44$ ).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that although there is a relationship between socio-economic conditions of individuals and their cultural values, such a relationship is not strong enough to claim that "cultural values of people will change if their socio economic conditions change".

Finding the association between the individual's attitudes and their socio-economic conditions, as well as between the individual's attitudes and their cultural values is the next task of data analysis. The results of this step of analysis are summarised in Table 7.4 and Table 7.5.

**Table 7.4 The Association between Socio-economic variables and Attitudes**

	Family role		Smal/busns		p particip		work.womn	
	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
Occupation	.62	.12	.26	.52	.60	.39	<u>.08</u>	<u>.45</u>
Month. Expen.	.50	.17	.22	-.21	.82	-.08	<u>.11</u>	<u>-.39</u>
Educat Level	.26	.09	.44	.02	.12	-.34	.31	.24
Family Size	.57	.23	.31	-.14	<u>.09</u>	<u>.51</u>	<u>.02</u>	<u>-.47</u>

General Composite Association,  $F = 0.32$

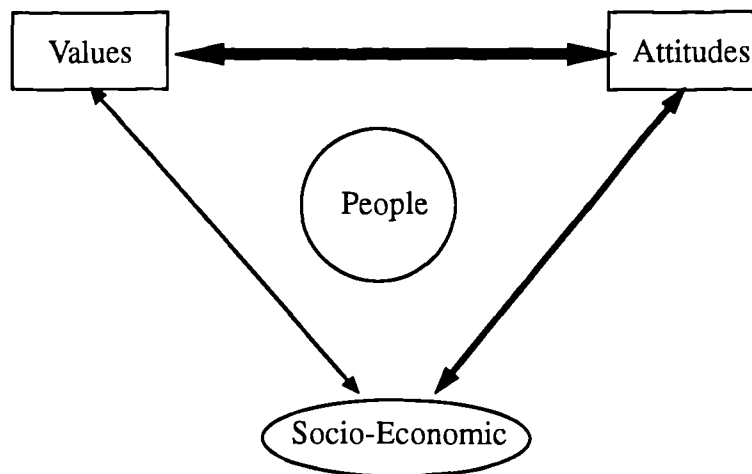
**Table 7.5 The Association between Cultural Values and Attitudes**

	Family role		Smal/busns		p participn		workg.womn	
	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
Religs/Partner	<u>.001</u>	<u>.42</u>	<u>.02</u>	<u>-.46</u>	.25	.74	<u>.05</u>	<u>-.58</u>
Religs/Belief	.47	-.10	<u>.03</u>	<u>.56</u>	.40	.29	.26	-.49
Traditin/ intrest	.32	.13	.32	.05	<u>.04</u>	<u>.72</u>	<u>.08</u>	<u>.56</u>
Religs/Custom	.57	.20	.47	-.23	<u>.06</u>	<u>.48</u>	<u>.05</u>	<u>.43</u>

General Composite Association = 0.21

As Tables 7.4 and 7.5 show there are eight relatively significant associations between group variables of cultural values and attitudes, where as there were only four association between the group of socio-economic and attitudes are significant. It may be concluded that not only is the impact of individuals' cultural values considerable but seems to have a bigger effect than their socio-economic conditions. At the same time the impact of socio-economic conditions on people's attitudes should not be ignored.

In other words, it can be said that the individuals' attitudes are influenced by the composite effects of their cultural values and their socio-economic conditions simultaneously. Both cultural values and socio/economics of people therefore, should be considered together in order to have an efficient and comprehensive picture of people's needs, beliefs and behaviour. The association derived from this data analysis is illustrated in a model (Fig. 7.5).

**Fig 7.3 A Conceptual model of inter-relationships between SE and AT and CV**

This model has already been suggested through the frequency distribution analysis of categorised variables (see Chapter 6). Now the data confirm such a meaningful relationship. The thicker line indicates the stronger association. Of course, this idea still is a hypothesis and needs more evidence to be accepted. Also, it should be considered that bivariate statistics are not able to examine clear relationships between these three groups of variables.

According to this model both cultural values and attitudes of people are influenced by their socio-economic conditions. Where the people's attitudes are influenced by their cultural values and socio-economic conditions, it seems that the impact of CV on AT is more than SE.

The above relationships and interactions needed to be more specified and measured statistically. The next step involves an attempt to find out which variables influenced each other and to what extent. This task was done through multiple regression analysis.

### 7.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

The problem with bivariate analysis is that the impact of any other variables can not be controlled when we measure the association between two variables. For example, we do not know whether the low interest in traditions among people with a high level of education is because of their income, job situation or else their cultural values. It is not recognisable whether the similarity of uneducated and educated people in choosing their partner is because of their socio economic conditions or their cultural values or both of them together.



Ideally, if we assess the importance of variables such as cultural values on educational differences we should ensure that the comparison made between the various groups of educated people are comparisons of those people who are alike in all relevant aspects. And it is very difficult to do this through bivariate analysis such as cross tabulation. In other words we need to measure the relationships and influences of more than one variable as independent, or explanatory variables, with a particular variable as dependant. Furthermore, we confront problems with small sample size and statistical reliability when we have to control many variables simultaneously.

Multiple Regression analysis is a technique that enables us to analyse a complete set of variables at the same time without running into the problem of small sample size (Goodman, 1970, McCullagh, 1980).

Such explanatory techniques would be employed, in particular, when one variable (or more) can be considered as a cause and another as an effect. In this case, the variable(s) which is supposed to be the cause(s) is called "independent" and the other one which is presumed to be the effect is called the "dependent" variable (Marsh, C.1988).

There are various techniques for focusing multi regression analysis. Considering the type (categorical) and nature (ordinal) of the data, the Logistic Model was chosen for this purpose.

### 7.3.1 The Logistic Model

Logistic regression analysis is often used to determine the relationships between the response probability and the exploratory variables. This model is appropriate for binary (such as male, female) and ordinal data (such as low, medium and high). This technique also fits linear logistic regression for response data by the method of maximum likelihood (Agresti, 1984; Harrell, 1986; SAS/stat, 1993, Vol. 2.).

The Logit model, as in all other regression analysis techniques, works on the principle that the more we know about a person, the more accurately we can predict other attributes of that person. It means that we can find out the nature of the relationship between variables and the extent of such effects, whether negative or positive.

Statistically, the basic output of the Logit model is an equation that shows such relationships in the form of  $Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3$  Where:

Y = Dependant variable

x1, x2, x3 = Independent variables

a = Intercept

b1, b2, b3 = Regression Co-efficient

The model was run several times in order to explore the relationships between three groups of variables, SE, CV and AT.

$CV = f(SE, AT)$

$AT = f(CV, SE)$

The analysis of the data in this part, contained two stages. In the first stage, each variable of the CV group were assumed as *dependent* and the other variables as *independent*. The program was employed to produce a model to explore the relationship of each dependent variable with all independent ones, under the condition of certain probability ( $p=.01$ ).

In the second stage, if the number of independent variables was more than four, then the program was run iteratively (stepwise) to find the new model with the most significant variables (maximum four). This stage also examined for AT group of variables as dependent and the situation with the other variables, CV and SE, as independent.

The result of the logistic procedure through SAS shows the co-efficient of each variable, Concordant and Disconcordant demonstrating how the variables fit in the model, and the P-value that shows the significance level of the model.

The odds ratio is another measure of association. If the probability of “success” is  $\pi_1$  in row 1 and  $\pi_2$  in row 2, the odds of success will be:

$$\text{odds1} = \pi_1 / (1 - \pi_1) \quad \text{odds2} = \pi_2 / (1 - \pi_2).$$

Then the odds ratio of odds for the two variables is:  $\theta = \text{odds1} / \text{odds2}$

If  $\pi_1 = \pi_2$  then  $\text{odds1} = \text{odds2}$ , consequently the ratio of odds for the two variables:  $\theta = 1$ . In this case, the variables are then independent. This means that the more the difference between the odds ratio and 1, the more dependency between the variables (Agresti, 1996).

In the first step, for each variable of group AT as dependent and the other variables as independent, the logistic regression analysis was run several times to find

out the most appropriate models. The results are summarised in tables such as Table 7.6.

**Table 7.6 The results of Logit Model for “People Participation”**

	parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	2.0877	8.066
Relig partner	0.1755	1.193
Relig blief	-0.2949	1.745
Traditions	-0.1957	0.981
Relig custom	-0.6734	0.584
Occupation	0.2176	1.310
M. Expenditure	0.1345	1.366
Education level	0.2089	1.229
Family size	-0.5613	0.569
Concordant	63.7%	
Disconcordant	31.4%	
P value	0.27	

The results suggest that there is an overall relationship between a combination of cultural values and socio-economic variables, and the attitudes variables. In most cases the number of CV variables involved and the extent of their impacts on AT variables are more than SE ones. This can support the idea that not only cultural values do affect people's attitudes, also their influence is more than the influence of people's socio-economic conditions. This issue contrasts with the concept which emphasises socio-economic conditions of people as the main influence in human life, as explained in the utilitarian model.

In the second step of regression analysis, the Logistic procedure was run while CV variables were considered as dependent and other variables as independent. According to the results there was no significant relationship between any variable of CV and variables of SE. This means that CV are not significantly dependent on SE variables alone. Rather they are dependent on firstly other CV variables and secondly on SE and AT variables. The result support our hypothesis again that socio economic changes do not necessarily produce cultural changes in accordance with their interests and directions.

In order to have a more precise and manageable interpretation of derived relationships, in the final step of regression analysis, it was decided to exclude those less important variables, via the stepwise procedure, in order to find a new model with the more significant variables (maximum four).

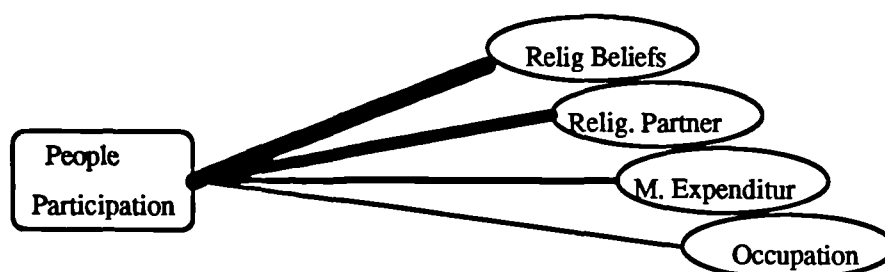
The results show that some sensible meaningful relationships can be presumed between individual's attitudes and the composition of their socio-economic conditions and their cultural values. For example:

Working women (opinion) =  $f$  (religious customs, religious beliefs, monthly expenditure, education level)

$p=0.02$  Concordant = 68.9% Disconcordant = 29.1%

The final summary of the results of models derived via SAS procedures are illustrated in the following descriptive figures.

**Fig 7.4 People Part.=  $f$  (Relig. Beliefs, Relig. Partner , M. Expenditure, Occupation,)**



**Table 7.7 Logit Model Results for "The Role of Family in Job Findings"**

	Parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	7.24	257.0
Relig/blief	2.31	2.365
Traditions	1.10	1.472
M. Expenditure	-0.06	0.528
Concordant	65.2%	
Disconcordant	31.6%	
P (value)	0.033	

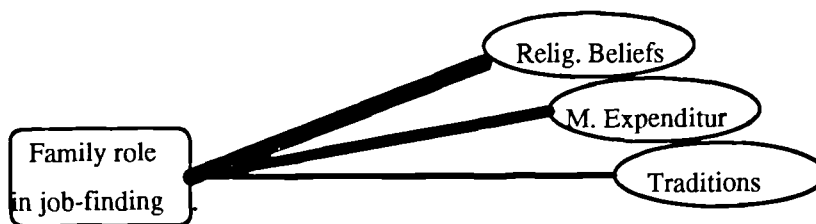
Fig 7.5 Role of family in jobs =  $f(\text{Relig Beliefs, M. Expenditure, Traditions})$ 

Table 7.8 The results Logit Model for “Establishing Small Business”

	Parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	3.452	3.491
Relig partner	1.892	2.517
Relig custom	0.923	1.342
Family size	0.298	1.109
Concordant	59.2%	
Disconcordant	36.1%	
P value	0.054	

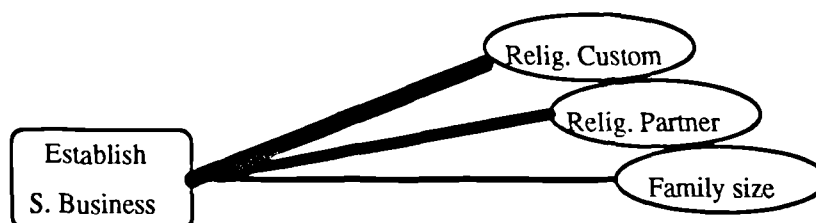
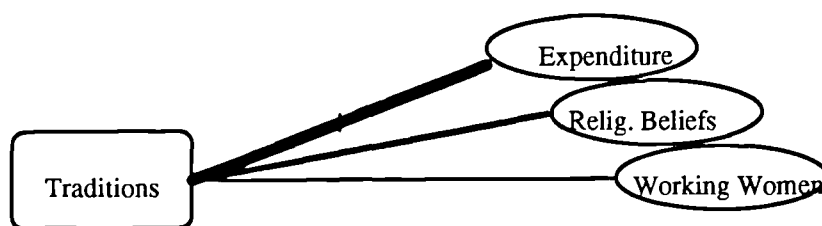
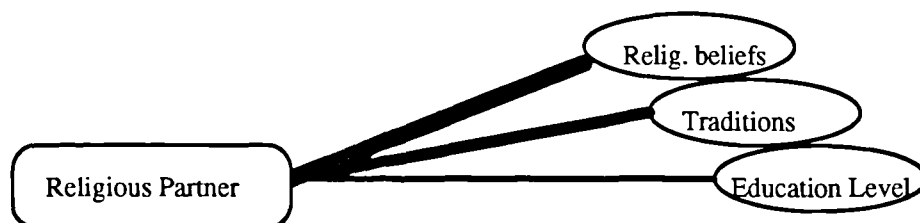
Fig 7.6 Small Business =  $f(\text{Relig. customs, Relig. Partner, Family size})$ 

Table 7.9 The Logit Model for “Traditional Interests”

	parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	3.478	7.408
Relig. Beliefs	3.286	5.247
M. Expenditure	0.981	0.194
Working out women	0.494	1.302
Concordant	72.5%	
Disconcordant	21%	
P (value)	0.045	

**Fig 7.7 Traditional Interests =  $f$ (M. Expenditure, Relig. Beliefs, Working Women)****Table 7.10 The Logit Model for “Choosing A Religious Partner”**

	Parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	1.243	12.241
Relig beliefs	1.092	3.108
Traditions	-0.056	1.345
Education Level	0.934	2.234
Concordant	7.2%	
Disconcordant	24.3%	
P value	0.021	

**Fig 7.8 Relig Partner =  $f$ (Relig. Beliefs, Traditions, Education level)****Table 7.11 The Logit Model for “Religious Beliefs”**

	parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	4.234	26.827
Relig Partner	1.322	3.236
Traditions	0.245	1.893
Working out women	1.342	2.118
Concordant	73.3%	
Disconcordant	25.6%	
P (value)	0.021	

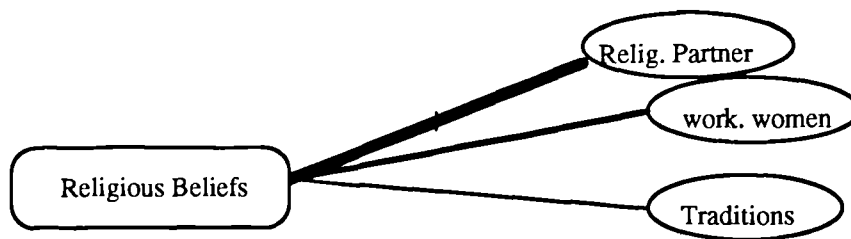
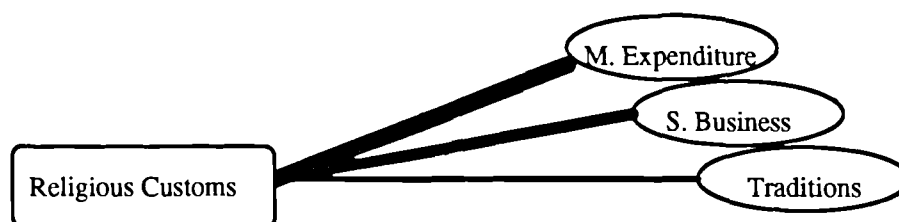
Fig 7.9 Relig Beliefs =  $f$  (Relig. Partner, Working women, Traditions)

Table 7.12 The Logit Model for "Religious Customs"

	parameter Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	14.567	9.990
Traditions	-0.982	1.297
M. Expenditure	1.356	4.271
Establish small bisness	1.209	2.183
Concordant	87.3%	
Disconcordant	12.4%	
P value	0.02	

Fig 7.10 Relig. Customs =  $f$  (M. Expenditure, Small Business, Traditions)

In the final stage of the data analysis, *Multi Dimensional Scaling* has been employed to explore a more precise relationship between the three proposed groups of variables (CV, SE and AT).

## 7.4 Multi Dimensional Scaling

Multi Dimensional Scaling (MDS) is a set of mathematical (statistical) techniques that enable a researcher to explore the "hidden structure" of a data base, and hence to achievement of new scientific insight. The significant implication of MDS in exploratory studies is that MDS is a method of discovering associations rather than imposing an idea on the data set (Forgas, 1979).

One of the main output of MDS is a spatial representation, consisting of a geometric configuration of points, as on a (2 or 3 dimensions) map. Each point in this map represents an object. This configuration explores the hidden structure in the data and in most cases it makes understanding data relationships quite easy through a geometrical display. In this geometrical display, the proximity appears as a geometrical distance. This means that the objects with more similarity are closer to each other, i.e. the larger the similarity, the smaller the distance between the variables (points) in the spatial map. The smaller the distance, the more likely there is to be a meaningful association between neighbouring variables. One of the most important methods of examining the configuration is simply to look at the arrangement of points. Each point is labelled to indicate which object is presented. MDS refers to a class of techniques using proximity among any kind of objects as the input. (Kruskal, 1964; Shepard, 1972; Forgas, 1979).

### Obtaining Proximity Data

A proximity is a number which indicates how similar or how different two objects are, or are predicted to be (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). There are some different ways to obtain proximity data. In some cases, respondents are asked, directly, to specify the similarity (or dissimilarity) among some objects, and such similarities (or dissimilarities) will be used as proximity. In this research, because of the characteristics of the data, a cross-tabulation analysis was done through a Chi-square test. A level of significance (probability) of every pair of variables was selected as a criterion for association (proximity).

Then, a matrix of similarity was built for all 15 selected variables derived from the first stage of data analysis. To find a visual interpretation of the relationships among variables through a spatial plot, we needed first to decide about the number of dimensions of the model.



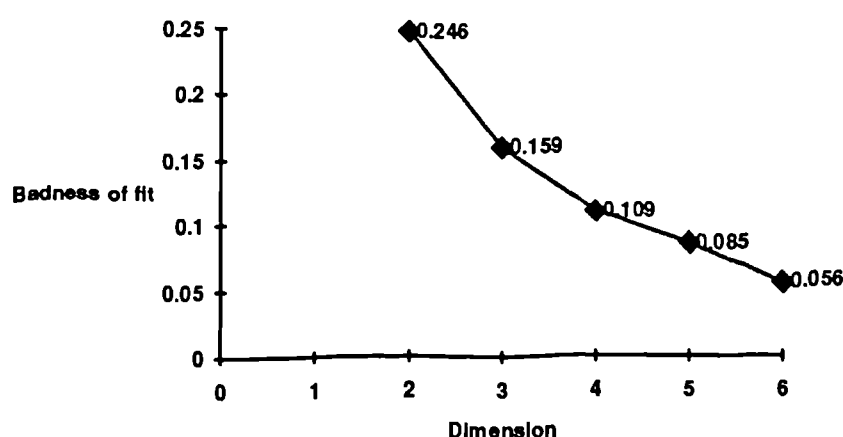
## Dimensions

The number of dimensions to use for a given set of data is a very significant part of MDS analysis. In order to have an appropriate model for representing and understanding the data, in most cases, some points such as interpretability, visibility, ease of use, and stability enter into decisions about optimum dimensions (Kruskal J. & Wish M., 1978).

For this reason, the objective in this research was to find appropriate dimensions rather than "correct" dimensions. However, there are a few techniques which can help to determine the number of dimensions. They are based on "minimum stress" and "maximum goodness, or minimum badness-of-fit". The default figure of the *Statistical Analysis System* (SAS) program is built on the determining the Badness-of-fit as a statistical characteristic appearing in the out put of the MDS procedure (SAS/stat, 1993). Therefore, it was considered as a criterion with which to find the appropriate number of dimensions (Kruskal, 1964; Everett, 1994).

Since there were 15 variables to analyse, 14 dimensions were needed to cover all possible states with optimal fit, but, as noted, the multi dimensional scaling attempted to provide an adequate simpler model with fewer dimensions. The MDS procedure, therefore, was run via SAS (Statistical Analysis System) computer program from one to six dimensions. The results are shown in Fig 7.11.

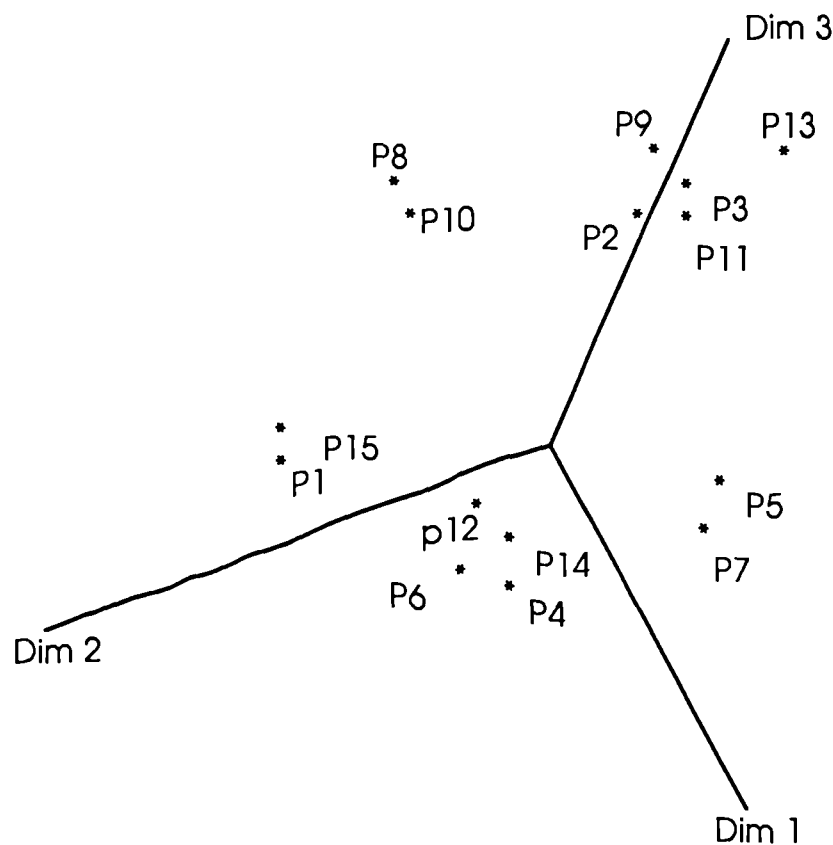
**Fig 7.11 Badness of fit for different dimension**



As Figure 7.11 shows, the values of Badness-of-Fit is optimal at six dimensions; i.e., at this level the number of variables which did not fit in the plot was minimal. In

other words a fuller description of the similarities would be obtained using six dimensions, but at a considerable loss of clarity as well as much difficulty in interpretation. Furthermore, from a statistical point of view, the difference between the amount of badness of fit for 2 and 3 dimension is about twice as great as the difference between 3 and 4. In other words, as the figure shows, the badness of fit sharply declined when moved from 2 to 3 dimensions, in comparison with other dimensions. Therefore, the choice of three dimension was reasonable one. Overall, for statistical and practical reasons, the three-dimensional solution was chosen as the most appropriate one. Finally, the MDS procedure was run for 15 selected variables, as these were the most important. The result is illustrated in Fig 7.12.

**Fig 7.12 The three-dimensional representation of CV, AT and SE variables**



P1="Occupation"  
P3="Religious and morality in...partner"  
P5="School or Home"  
P7="Jobs Opportunities Perspective"  
P9="People Participation"  
P11="Extended Family & job finding"  
P13="Traditions"  
P15="Education Level"

P2="Satisfaction with MIS"  
P4="Monthly Expenditure"  
P6="Religious Beliefs"  
P8="Family size"  
P10="Establishing Small Business"  
P12="Working Women"  
P14="Religious Customs"

## Interpretation

In Fig 7.12 the selected variables are seen within a three dimensional scaling plot. The variables are grouped in a few clusters. Some of them are quite close to each other, to show the existing association or similarities among themselves.

In some cases, it is expected that every dimension of such a plot can be referred to one of the certain given dimensions of urban life i.e. economic, social and cultural. For example, putting monthly expenditure in an economic dimension or education in a social one. Such an expectation is reliable when the different existing aspects of the subject, such as political interests, are clearly separable.

But in this study, as the plot shows, it is hard to use a particular dimension as a single co-ordinate axis, for referring to a direction of particular interest characteristics of the variables under study. In other words, according to the perceived similarities between different variables, from this survey it is unlikely to be possible to make an obvious distinction among such variables. This means that social, cultural and economic aspects of urban life are not separable or confinable into certain groups. According to the result, it is not acceptable to claim that these variables on one dimension are exactly social (for example), and those on another have only economic features. It can be said that such variables have multi-feature characteristic. Most of them represent social, cultural and economic dimensions simultaneously. For example people's attitudes towards "working women" are based on their cultural values as well as their economic needs.

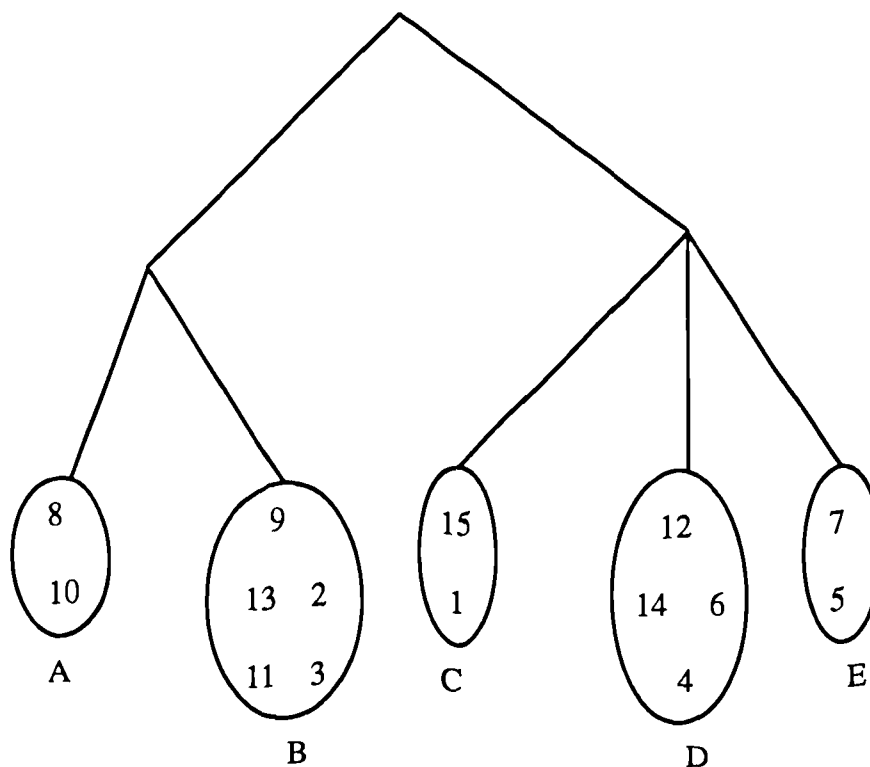
However, two significant results can be pointed out through this MDS analysis. First, the results indicate that there is a strong relationship between the social, cultural and economic dimensions of urban life; hence, they should be considered together to illustrate an efficient and comprehensive picture of urban life. The results show that it can be an obvious mistake if we ignore people's culture as well as their values and only consider their economic needs. So, the conceptual viewpoint presented in Chapter 5, seems to be confirmed in the empirical data.

Second, looking again at the Fig 7.12, a few clusters of variables can be recognised. They can initially be categorised into two main groups. On the top seven variables are seen, the "traditional interests", "satisfaction with MIS", "choosing a religious and moral partner", "the role of the extended family in job finding" and "people participation" are at the right, while "family size" and "establishing small businesses opportunity" are located to the left quite close to each other. As the picture shows, there is a combination of social, cultural and economic variables within this group.

On the bottom, eight variables grouped relatively together. They are "home or school in terms of children education" and "job opportunity perspective" at the left. On the middle the variables of "monthly expenditure", "religious customs", "working women" and "religious beliefs" have a close relationship, while, on the left are two very close, variables of "education level" and "occupation". It can be understood, again, that these variables are miscellaneous so it was hard to categorise them in a certain group.

Five clusters, therefore, were derived from these two general groups. On the top-left the cluster A containing "family size" and "small businesses opportunity" has been recognised. Cluster B includes "traditions", "people's participation", "religious and morality in choosing a partner", "the role of the extended family in finding a job" and "satisfaction with MIS" was on the right,. On the bottom, cluster C consists of "education level" and "occupation". Cluster D covers "monthly expenditure", "religious customs", "working out women" and, "religious beliefs", and cluster E contains "home or school in terms of children education" and "Job creation perspective" variables on the right (Fig 7.13).

**Fig 7.13 The five perceived clusters from multidimensional scaling**



P1="Occupation"

P3="Religious and morality in...partner"

P5="School or Home"

P7="Jobs Opportunities Perspective"

P9="People Participation"

P11="Extended Family & job finding"

P13="Traditions"

P15="Education Level"

P2="Satisfaction with MIS"

P4="Monthly Expenditure"

P6="Religious Beliefs"

P8="Family size"

P10="Establishing Small Business"

P12="Working-Out Women"

P14="Religious Customs"

As a general idea, clusters B and D should be considered carefully, (by employing other multivariate analyses techniques) since they cover nine significant variables (more than sixty percent of all selected variables). Furthermore the interpretation of such groups of variables are more important and wider than other clusters which contain only two variables.

Finally it can be concluded that the results of multidimensional scaling, in this part of data analysis would not efficiently produce a comprehensive picture of the given variables, the significant level of perceived relationship. And as the most important point, it wouldn't be able to submit a reasonable interpretation leading to present a particular concept.

## 7.5 Discussion

The results of the Crosstabulation and multiple regression analysis of the obtained variables suggest that:

1) Different levels of education, income, occupation or size of family did not contribute significantly to people's overall cultural values

2) Different levels of respecting cultural values together with different socio-economic conditions such as education, income, family size and occupation affect people's attitudes towards various aspects of life in MIS.

3) Considering the responses regarding cultural values, it can be concluded that most respondents have complete commitment to some basic values, such as helping the young to manage their lives. Other values respondents hold, are derived from their religious beliefs, they also feel commitment and obligation to support them, such as choosing a religious partner. The third group of values could be referred to as their traditional interests, such as their music, accent, customs and so on. The results show that, although the extent of people's interests in such traditions is quite high, it is not as much as the percentage of human values. Perhaps, we can claim that the respondents' cultural values based on their human values are very common among the people. After that, religious beliefs, and then traditions are the sources of people's shared values and attitudes. This can support the idea of cultural layers presented in this theses (see Chapter 5).

Probably, there are many other things that we can consider through empirical work. We could have done further analyses to locate new variables in new groups and

using other techniques of analysis. But such analysis may divert us from our main goal, while the analysis outlined above was directed to answering the proposed questions.

In general, the findings illustrated in the above tables and figures show that the weight of cultural values variables do not differ significantly for different subgroups of people with different education levels, income level, occupation and family size. The results also demonstrate that the social and economic conditions of people do not significantly affect their cultural values, i.e. the basic cultural values of people are relatively independent of their socio-economic conditions. This supports the hypothesis that cultural values are strong and stable among the MIS citizens; also the cultural values are unified rather than diverse.

Overall, the findings of the survey show that people's attitudes are based on both their values, and at the same time shaped by their socio-economic characteristics. It seems that cultural values define and explain people's world views, shaping individuals' attitudes and perceptions. In most cases people judge according to their values and their attitudes towards perceived attributes and paths to goals.

To understand MIS residents' cultural values, it is necessary to know their cultural background, in particular their religion which forms the origin of most values. Also, it should be considered that, at the same time the socio-economic conditions of individuals do affect people's attitudes. People's attitudes in turn, may influence the original values. Thus serious attention should be paid to understanding the nature of attitudes, how these are shaped and changes, and how they affect values and beliefs.

Throughout the survey it was realised that traditions, religion and human values had considerable roles in both the individual and social lives of the people. The further investigation showed that Islamic beliefs and ideas are the basis of almost all aspects of people's values in MIS. This may be one of the main reasons for the unified cultural values and social norms among the residents.

The role of religion in social life has been considered in different fields of social science. In a functionalist perspective on religion, Emil Durkheim (1912) argued that, without shared values and moral beliefs, social life is impossible. He called such values and beliefs a "*Collective Conscience*" and claimed that there would be no society in the absence of them. Parsons (1965), in a similar concept, believed that human action is directed and controlled by values provided by social systems. He argued that cultural systems provide general guidelines for action in the form of beliefs, values and systems of meaning. The norms which directed actions are also integrated and formed by such values and beliefs. This means that religion produces general guidelines for actions which are declared in various

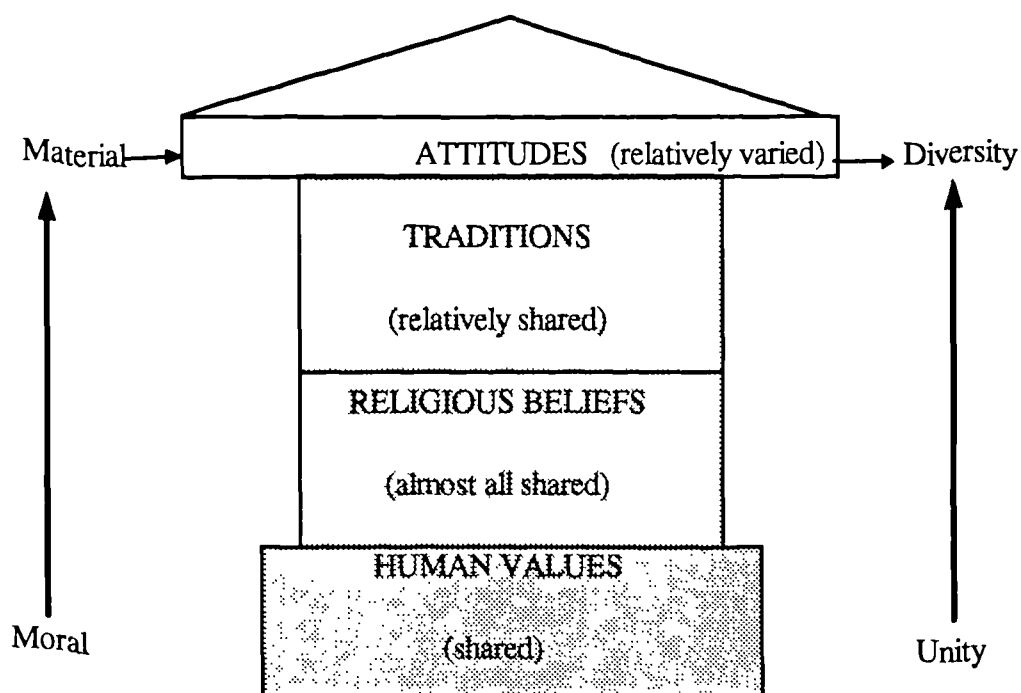
norms. Provision of such general principles and moral values means that religion sustains the establishment of the consensus which is necessary for unity and solidarity within society.

In fact, religious beliefs provide meaning for life, through answering human's questions about himself, and the world he lives in. Parsons noted that one of the crucial functions of religion is to "make sense" of all events. Religion has a range of answers for any event in terms of an integrated and consistent pattern of meanings. This helps intellectual and emotional adjustment, leading to order and stability in the society (Parsons, 1956).

Some sociologists, (Haralambos, 1983), criticised the functionalists' concepts about religion and culture and argued that such ideas are more relevant to small societies where members share beliefs and values and there is close cultural integration and social institutions. They believed that Durkhiem's view could not be generalised particularly in modern societies which have many social and ethnic groups with a range of cultural and religious beliefs.

Indeed, as already discussed in the previous chapters, culture consists of different "layers". This can be imagined like a building, a "*Culture Building*". As we understand it, through this research, in a society like MIS, on the roof of the people's culture building are located their attitudes. Such attitudes are more diverse and can be changed quickly by new socio economic conditions (Fig. 7.14). The simple model of this issue has already illustrated in Chapter 5, the city as culture.

**Fig 7.14 The Conceptual Structure of MIS People's Culture**



In the middle of the culture building we can find people's traditions which are derived from their historical backgrounds. The layer below this is the people's religious beliefs and the associated values. And finally, we can see human values which spread among the society. We argue here, that the people of MIS have many common and shared values, while at the same time they have some differences and variations in attitudes. Reconsidering the results of the survey, it can be concluded that respondents were very close to each other in terms of human and religious values, but differed about traditions and attitudes. This means that the extent of such similarity reduces when we consider the top layers of their culture, traditions and attitudes. It might be concluded that people's values in the lower layers are more common and stable. In other words, the lower the layer, the more stable and unified the values, the higher the layer, the more diversity and change. This is the essence of our findings and leads to the conclusion that, in societies like MIS, at least, we should consider the lower layer of people's cultural values as a valuable basis for urban regeneration, because these values are more common and stable. Therefore, such a consideration of cultural values can assist achieving urban policy and strategies goals.

Having obtained results that bear directly on the original hypotheses, it is valuable to briefly summarise the main findings insofar as they relate to the research questions, the relevant literature and hypotheses.

1. The society of MIS consists of individuals with very strong inter-relationships. Most people know each other, or at least know the families (extended) of each other. They understand each other and make sense of feelings, actions and reactions towards different things. Although, the traditional form of the extended family, where all members live in the same place, is not common in the city, the relations between members of the family, relatives and the members of the tribe are still quite strong, dominant and sustainable. The glue of almost all such relations is cultural and moral values.

2. It seems that, in the MIS society, the Islamic beliefs have a considerable contribution in creating and protecting people's values and beliefs, with rather strong power to direct their attitudes and actions. It is important to consider that moral attitudes and social obligations are very respected in the society. In other words, the individual's interest under a religious belief is formed in accordance with public interests. This means that religion can cause and preserve social unity and solidarity and be a basis for urban regeneration.

3. It can be said that in MIS, culture as a set of social norms and values dominates the society in the shape of habits, customs and convention. Cultural values among the people of MIS occupy a more central position in their personality as well as their attitudes. In societies like MIS, cultural values connect all aspects of social life together. The findings show that people's values are stable and mostly common, because the sources



of values are mostly the same. MIS as a small society has its own socio-cultural and historical background. Although it was not directly asked through the questionnaire, my observation over many years is that almost all people are Muslims, with different levels of commitment to religious activity. Such shared sources of values bring about the shared system of meanings among the society.

4. The Bakhtiari is one of the most powerful ancient tribes of Iran's nation. These people have got their own rich culture and traditions. Almost all Bakhtiari people are proud of their tribe and feel a serious commitment to their traditions. In MIS, almost all residents are from the Bakhtiari tribe, more than 99 percent of respondents. They love their origins and their home city, more than 84 percent of the respondents have been born in the city. So, it seems that such feelings and commitment could play a significant role in the future of the city, if only they were understood and employed properly. So, the social relations between people are quite strong and based on three significant social institutions: the family, the tribe and the citizenship. These three social institutions will be considered more in the later chapters.

5. Of course, the differences between individuals' attitudes are undeniable. But it cannot be claimed that the only basis of most such differences are individuals' social and economic situations. Instead, the findings of the survey showed that, at the same time as considering socio-economic situations, the influences of cultural values are considerable and even more important. More or less the results show that people with the same cultural background and commitment and with similar socio-economic conditions have very similar attitudes towards certain objects. Of course, as already noted, we could not exactly predict an individual's attitudes and behaviour towards different things even if we knew his values and situation. Many other factors are involved in people's actions that mostly have not been recognised and are not measurable.

Therefore, if urban regeneration is to be utilised in MIS the following points must be addressed:

1) "Culture" needed to be considered seriously, not only to evaluate our narrow rational interpretation of urban life but to assist us to explain other dimensions of urban life sufficiently. The key point is that in societies like MIS, cultural values can assist social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress which threaten the stability of the society. The cultural values should be considered as the driving force in the movement for better life in both material and moral aspects.

2) The role of family, education and work should be considered as the transmitters of cultural values among the people, in order to benefit from the potential of cultural values as a driving force of urban regeneration.

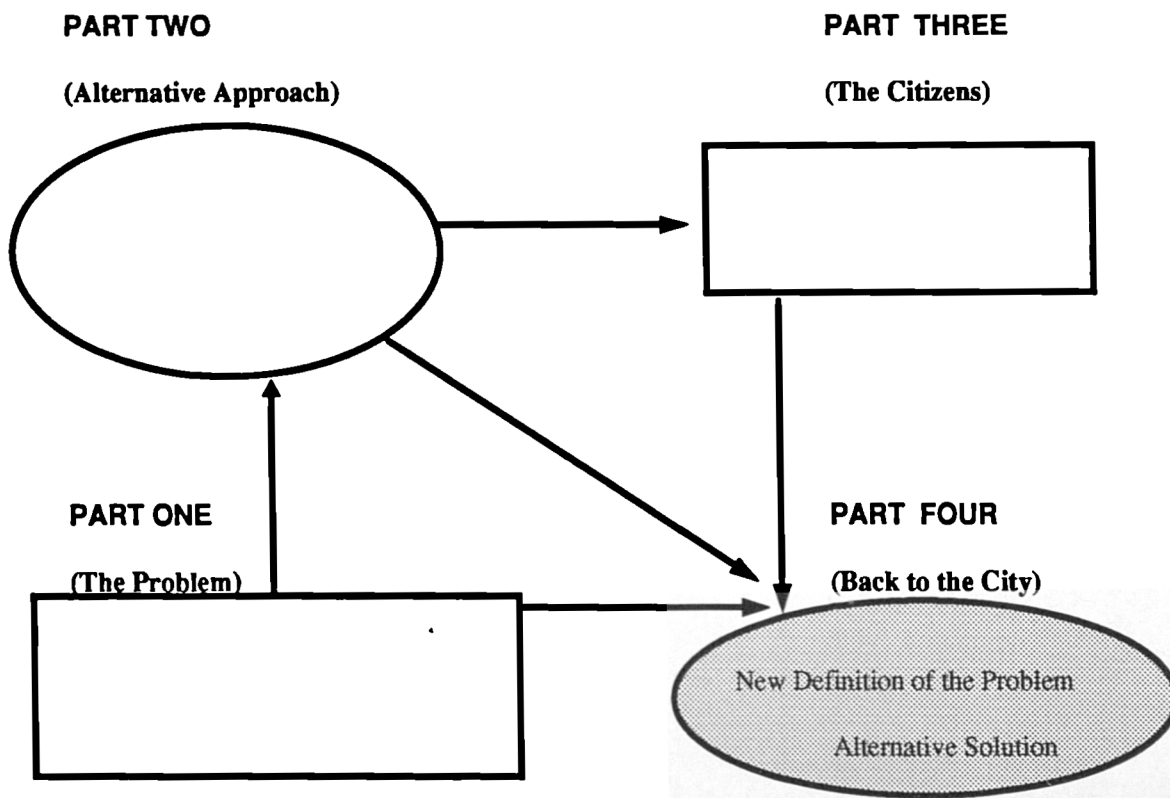
3) The inter-relationships of the family structure, education system and work opportunities should be understood in a consistent dynamic systemic way.

4) In the process of re-building the city, it should be seriously considered that citizens want to participate in the construction of their city for a better future. This willingness should be appreciated, supported and directed in the right way.

Therefore, understanding and strengthening people's traditions and cultural values, as well as encouraging people to participate in the construction of the future of MIS, is a vital immediate task.

Clarifying the findings of the survey and developing the implications of such findings together with our conceptual approach to social life and city, now we need to go back to MIS to re-define the problem more precisely. In the next chapter we reconsider both the evolution of MIS and the survey findings, in order to explore the role and function of people as passive agency or active agent in the processes of the economic development and socio-cultural changes. This may lead to find efficient policies and strategies to achieve the proposed aims and objectives for the future of MIS.

# PART 4



# 8

## Development, Decline and the Cultural Transformation in MIS

### Introduction

This research began by outlining the existing urban problems of MIS and then developing an alternative approach to the problems by focusing on the role of cultural values and traditions as the “driving force” of cultural-economic regeneration. Now, we are going back to MIS in order to re-consider the socio-economic and cultural transformation of the city, through such a proposed conceptual window.

This chapter intends to review the story of MIS explaining the development process which has led to socio-cultural transformation in the city. The chapter consists of three parts. In part one, we re-consider the cultural characteristics of local people before the oil discovery. The socio-economic situation of MIS as well as the cultural confrontation with western culture during the domination of British Petroleum upon the city will be considered in part two. Part three investigates the existing situation of MIS, concentrating on people’s culture and attitudes, as obtained through the survey. It should be noted that the sources required for this chapter were very limited and restricted. Such a lack of data and evidence made analysis and interpretations difficult and in some cases perhaps provisional. Accordingly, the processes of economic development, social change and cultural transformation of MIS are divided into three periods:

- 1) Before the discovery of oil
- 2) Development following the discovery of oil and
- 3) After the exhaustion of oil resources and the Islamic revolution.

These periods are summarised in Fig 8.1.

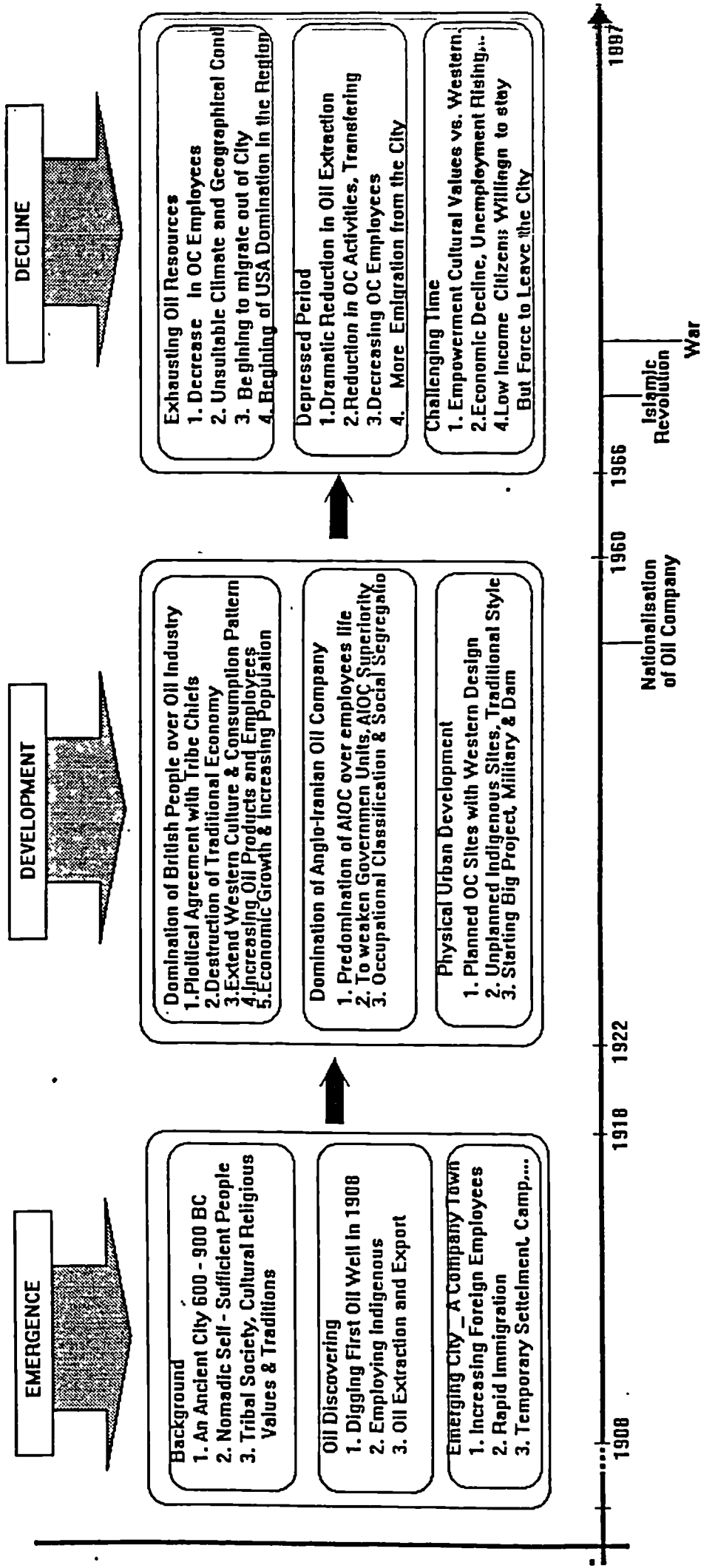


Fig 8.1 The Evolution of MIS

## 8.1 The Period of Before the Discovery of Oil:

### A homogenous society and endogenous economic system

As described in the previous chapters, the period before the discovery of oil, can be divided into two parts. The first is the MIS's era as a historic and ancient city of Iran. That period relates to a long time ago and this research is not concerned with that.

The second concerns the period immediately prior to the discovery of oil, at the beginning of the twentieth century. There is no adequate information about the socio-economic conditions of people in that period. Generally, indigenous people lived under a nomadic self-sufficient life style, mostly around the existing MIS. They produced for their needs and in some cases they exchanged their products with others' goods. Due to geographic location, suitable topography and favourable climate and the lands surrounding, MIS area was a centre for animal breeding activities in the region, before the discovery of oil.

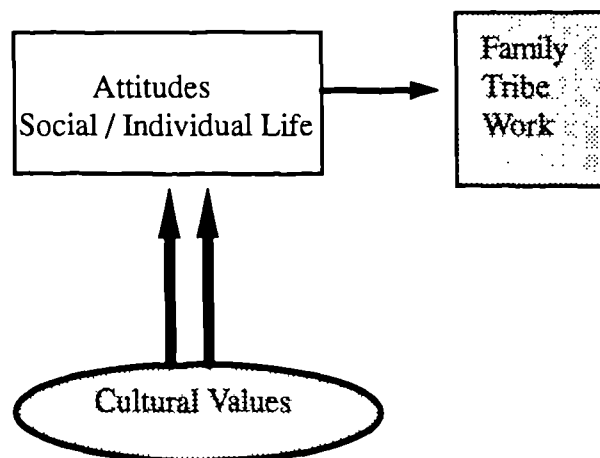
In fact, the existing inhabitants of MIS are mostly the children of those nomadic people who lived in the Bakhtiari mountains in tribal groups and relations (Zista, 1991; Local Authority of MIS, 1994). They had moved from one point to another in order to find the best location for their flocks. Then, the bell of the Oil Company rang and called many workers. At first, people were attracted and were interested to work with foreign people. They earned a great deal of money in a short time. After that, the Bakhtiari people exchanged their natural green environment for the life in the city, as the centre for oil production. They moved to the oil centre and joined with the many other workers who had come from other parts of Iran or abroad. Indigenous animal breeders and farmers left their traditional jobs and became employees of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to serve in oil extraction (Ferrier, 1982).

The significant point, in terms of culture, in the period of before the discovery of oil, was the strong association between people's traditions and cultural values, and their attitudes toward the world and their lives. For some urban sociologists such as Redfield (1941, 1953), called such a society as *folk society* which has been distinguished from urban society. The folk society as Redfield defined, is the society

with a system of common understanding; in which the technical order is subordinated by the moral order. The moral order, which we generally refer to as cultural values here, is self-consistent and strong. The characteristics of such a society have been identified as isolation, cultural homogeneity; organisation of conventional understanding into a single web of interrelated meanings; adjustment to the local environment; predominant personal character of the relationships; relative importance of familial and tribal institution; strong religious beliefs and traditions (Redfield, 1941).

The people of such a society thought the same as they behaved, because the sources of values and beliefs were their own traditions and religion. It can be said that people's attitudes were completely based on their cultural values. Strong tribal relations, together with family kinship were the most dominant social relations of the society who lived in or around the existing MIS. Such a relationship between people and their culture can be showed in an ideal model (Fig 8.2).

**Fig 8.2 The cultural values of MIS's people in the period of Before the discovery of oil**



According to this model, people's attitudes were closely associated with their cultural values including their religious beliefs and traditions. In other words, their system of social life was quite stable and protected from any external element<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>This understanding and analysis of the past derived from my twenty years experience of living in a neighbouring city as well as the result of personal interviews with local people through my field work.

This socio-cultural and economic system of life, in this period, was very simple but strong and independent. On the economic side, the consumer was mostly the producer. The paradigm of the production cycle was endogenous. It was self-sufficient, autonomous and sustainable. The quality of life as well as the sense of well-being were directly defined by people, and based on their cultural values. In the social life, there was a strong social relation between the members of a family and the members of the tribe. They shared their economic benefits and social movement. Overall, the specification of people's lives, in this period, can be summarised in three notions: sustainable and unified cultural values, a self-sufficient basic economy and strong social relations.

In fact, the emergence of the oil industry in the area gradually broke down this solidarity and represented a new culture as a powerful external force for significant socio-economic and cultural changes. After a short time, MIS became a famous city in the country and even in the West. It was recognised as a major settlement of the Bakhtiari tribe, as well as an important resource of natural oil by both Iranian and foreign people.

However, the question arises, in this context, as to how social organisation and the people's culture could be sustained in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes. And how were social relations and cultural values transformed by new western norms. To answer such questions, it is necessary to focus on the emergence of new socio-economic conditions after the oil discovery in MIS.

## **8.2 After the Discovery of Oil: the Development Period**

The story of the evolution and development of MIS, in this period, is a clear pattern of the confrontation of the past with the present, and of traditions with modernity. The city of MIS was a node in a wider system of interaction where the indigenous met the foreign and the global was articulated and interpreted at the local level. Within such a framework of the city as a place, cultural values were eclipsed by new attitudes and life styles. To elaborate this notion we need to examine the interaction between socio-economic changes and the cultural transformation in MIS.



### **8.2.1 Economic Changes**

Obviously, the most important function of MIS, in this period, has been economic achievement. MIS as a colonial company town was the “nerve centre” of economic activity of the British Oil Petroleum Company in the region. The process of economic development in MIS, has been in accordance with the familiar models of economic development.

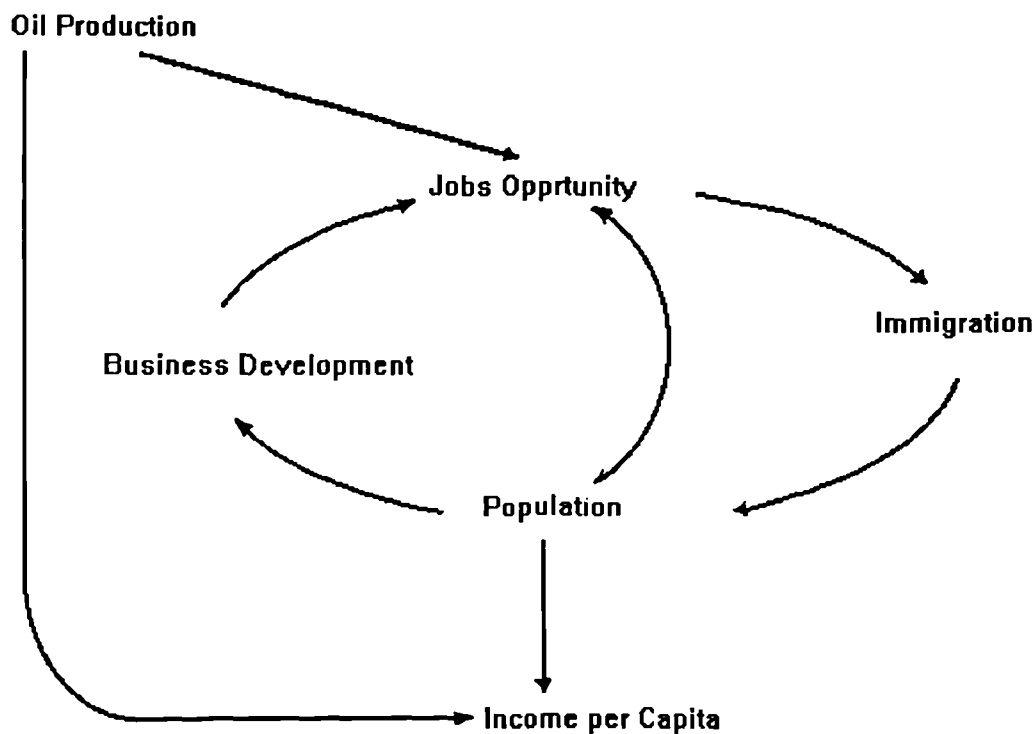
#### **The Dynamic Model of the Socio-Economic Development of MIS**

The process of the economic development of MIS, as described in the foregoing pages, is now embedded in a dynamic model of the urban development process. According to the economic part of the model (Fig. 8.3), jobs created by the oil industry attracted people to the city. The increasing population created more demands and more job availability as well. Again, new job availability attracted new people and a causal positive loop was generated. On the one hand, remarkable investment in the oil sector caused a rapid growth in income per capita and also a very high rate of employment in the oil industry (see Chapter 2). On the other hand, this economic achievement in the oil industry seriously undermined the pre-existing traditional economy. Although there is no adequate data to show the level of income in the region before and after the discovery of oil, it can be said that one of the main factors for people’s perceptions and their rational choice to move from one place to another is the difference between income levels. So, undoubtedly, income and revenue were one of the main factors of MIS’s attractiveness and consequent immigration. As the model shows, there is a positive relationship between the number of employment opportunities in the city and the amount of immigration to the city. It is presumed in the model that job opportunity was equal to available jobs in the area.

However, immigration does not immediately swarm to job opportunities. Since migrants react to perceived opportunity, the slow process of gaining information may cause a 5 to 20 years delay in response. The existing data shows a 10 years response delay in MIS. According to the existing theories (Rust, 1975; Bradbury, 1982; Friedrichs, 1993), the people immigrated to the city, from the rural areas (mostly), the other cities of the region and from abroad, for employment and job opportunities

generated by the Oil Company. Because the economy of the city was based on a single industry of oil, hence, the employment structure was quite narrow.

**Fig 8.3 The Dynamic model of Socio-Economic Changes after the discovery of oil in MIS**



The increased population not only increased the demands for the city service industries, but also made the area attractive to business enterprise. Population growth also allowed economic activity to develop by providing a readily available labour supply. The additional economic development created demand for additional labour. Further, this demand increased job opportunities in the area. So, the rapid growth of MIS attracted some small firms and services, while they were mostly dependent on the oil industry and its development or decline.

The important external factor in this loop is the development of the Oil Industry which is the main source and initial generator of job opportunities in this mechanism. The public investment in the oil sector increased the amount of total income in the area and consequently the amount of income per capita increased. This situation continued

until the first sign of exhaustion in the oil fields appeared, when the generator of the economic growth of MIS was collapsing.

### **Economic Growth and Social Relations**

Income is determined mainly by occupation and also plays a crucial role in the emergence of a class system leading to social segregation. Increasing oil production led to the economic growth of MIS and improvement in the level of income per capita, particularly among oil industry employees. This provided adequate conditions for the prolonged domination and further growth of the Western culture as the creator of such development and improvement in the city. It meant that, under the capitalist system, through determined social and economic relations and extensive formal norms, people were directed to consume their time, thought and money under specific manners and styles (Sa'edy, 1995). To be involved in most western consumption patterns and systems of prestige needed high levels of income as well as freedom from traditional and cultural values and obligations.

In other words, obviously, in the dominant western culture, the criteria of prestige and economic position were closely interrelated. Thus, in MIS, wealth, needed for purposes of more consumption, was gained through social position which mostly depended on nationality and education level and preparation to live a western life style "in public".

In this situation, only those people who had a good connection to central government or tribal chiefs could get a suitable job in the company. Insufficient vacancies caused a serious competition between the majority of local people for a good job and a higher position. This was another reason for social conflict and the breaking of social relations. Furthermore, those who achieved the new high positions tended to develop new attitudes and consequently separated themselves from the past and other people. This process caused economic conflict and social stratification. Such a process can be found in the family structure and education system as well as other socio-economic institutions (Sa'edy, 1995).

Accordingly, the social features of MIS, in this period, can be defined as:

1. Power (economic, social and political) was principally in the hands of the non-indigenous minority who presented and supported their own culture and behaviour, whilst the social rights of the local people were either by-passed or very restricted.

2. The foreign minority dominated technological and economic resources, and as a result, also dominated the socio-economic institutions.

3. The majority of indigenous people were culturally, racially (or ethnically), and religiously different from the dominant people who were European.

4. Social segregation was created and then developed by the OC, through occupational stratification, income differences, social conflict and physical separation in accommodation (in facilities and location), leisure and shopping centres and so on (see Chapter 2).

5. The imposition of industrialised society onto a non-industrialised one, and linking of radically different civilisations in some forms of relationship (such as employer-employee)

6. A conflicting relationship where the local people were treated as instruments of business interests.

Overall, it might be said that westerners brought economic growth in terms of jobs, wealth and education, but at the price of social stratification and cultural domination.

### **8.2.2 Physical Changes and Social Segregation**

Reviewing the evolution of MIS shows that economic and political domination of the OC over the city was inseparable from the rise of the city as a centre for the provision and appropriation of resources. That emergence was accomplished by western cultural symbolism that considered city-building as a place for the OC employees to live, as well as a place for more production and more profits.

Indeed, urbanisation and industrialisation are interconnected, and constructing a base for production and export manufacturing has essentially expanded the

interventions of the state and the companies for building new cities and the growth of the old ones. In MIS, this process began with the establishment of a company town and continued with the provision of the basic infrastructure needed for the workers and the oil industry.

The visible indications of Western culture appeared in the economic relations and physical shape of the urban infrastructure. The structuring of urban space was directed by the Oil Company that was, in turn, the embodiment of western norms and practices. The Oil Company also shaped the division of labour, and the definition of work relations and rules.

The subsequent activities concentrated on housing, a shopping centre, leisure facilities, transpiration and medical services. But, such facilities were only specified for the Oil Company employees who were already classified by occupation. That resulted in effectively depriving ordinary citizens of land, housing, and a healthy, pleasant urban environment. At the same time, people's living places, shopping centre, transportation, and leisure centre were classified and allocated based on occupational classification. This gradually created social class divisions which in turn led to considerable social segregation and tension. People's cultural values, traditions and social relations were the only forces confronting such tensions. However, these cultural and social values were progressively affected by new western norms and behaviour which were economically dominant and controlled all urban activities (MIS without Oil, 1992).

In MIS as elsewhere, urban space had two types of function. As the physical setting for all human activities, it served a utilitarian function. Urban forms were intended to satisfy the social and economic needs of the civil society, in particular Europeans. The built environment also served a symbolic function, expressing western culture, guiding public behaviour and expressing social messages. The city's physical environment was designed, mostly by westerners, to examine both functions. For example, the hospital, the factory, or the shopping centre served the people's needs designed for utilitarian purposes (maximising individual preferences). At the same time, each of these physical buildings, carried and indicated a symbolic meaning of the western culture. In fact they were designed as instruments for both the provision of

residents' needs and to guide human behaviour. Western style bars and cafe, cinema, and swimming pool (uni-sex) were the examples of these physical environments, which were developments and activities very different to the indigenous people's culture (See illustrations in Appendix 2).

New forms of architecture, such as the "*bungalow*" appeared; European styles and symbols were erected in all official buildings, parks and other public spaces. This was accompanied by the western bureaucratic systems of governance, including city management and planning. Such a system and rules continued, even after the nationalisation of the oil industry.

In the context of architecture and culture, it can be said that both Western culture and technology might well affect the gradual disappearance of the large compound and the increase of smaller self-contained houses occupied by individual (nuclear) families. British style accommodation with small areas and spaces divided by fences, in fact, by-passed both the traditional Islamic architecture (in other Iranian cities such as Dezful and Shushtar) identified with large spaces, surrounded by a high wall for privacy, and the Bakhtiari's traditional large house with a veranda and two or three rooms attached to it (Oliver, 1997). Indigenous people had to be accommodated in such European flats. However, different types of such accommodation was allocated to employees in accordance with their occupation in the company (see illustrations, Appendix 2).

These "Western-style" buildings and the urban environment they created departed from the structure of Iranian-Islamic traditional urbanism. The transformation they brought about was sudden and strong. Rather than being additional to the existing fabric (in the region or country), they acted as the centre of a new order. They occupied the landscape, providing an explicit, in the physical and visual sense, but perceptual environment. These new technologies, shapes, and symbols were, to many, embodiments of modernity itself.

It would seem that during the early 1920s and the late 1940s the notion of a westernised urban culture, as the consciousness and practice of a way of life in the modern city, was created and expressed in physical form. In this situation, the city of

MIS emerged as the specific space of contradictions and social tensions, whilst the atmosphere of the city represented economic development, planning and implementation as well as dealing with significant industrial projects.

Overall, the Oil Company, as the provider of institutional structures and allocator of resources, has dominated the urban environment in MIS from the oil discovery era to nationalisation. The history of MIS demonstrates the dominant role of the Oil Company in creating and transforming urban space, embedding and manipulating western culture in the city.

### **8.2.3 Occupational Classification and Social Segregation**

For many analysts, every type of political and economic system may emphasise specific operational characteristics. Very often, the construction of new characteristics generates conflicts and contradictions that may lead to transformation, development or decline (Eisenstadt and Shachar, 1987).

The rapid growth of MIS and the provision of modern urban facilities and infrastructure, together with the growth of oil exploration, leading to considerable job creation, caused a huge immigration to the city. The imbalance of economic and modern welfare services between MIS and its rural areas and other cities in the region increased the immigration to the city (see population changes in Chapter 2).

The new conditions that had been set up, in MIS by the Oil Company caused a new social order and classes, generating social conflicts within the society. One of the most important impacts was the filling of new jobs created, mostly by oil industry, by non-indigenous people (mostly from other parts of Iran). Also, these migrants had to change their work culture from that of a self-employee or work in the family group to a new industrial daily wage earning rule. New cultural and ethnic mixes were produced and new classes of people-waged labour, urban middle class and high class appeared, as a result of occupational classification (Bamberg, 1994). In MIS, the residents were classified into two main different groups of the OC employees and the non-OC employees. At the same time the employees of the oil industry were classified as worker, junior officer and senior officer. The location and quality of urban facilities

such as accommodation, leisure centre etc. For each group were quite different from others. (see illustrations in appendix 2). Therefore, social segregation was the main outcome of such political-economy under colonial capitalism. That meant that occupation, in MIS, was not merely a profession and a source of revenue, but also a reason for social prestige and access to many other social benefits and services. Thus, people were in a serious competition to get a higher occupational rank in the OC. This increased social tension between people and affected their social solidarity.

Social discrimination was another feature of this era. During the dominance of the OC over MIS's oil industry, the chance of Iranian employees to occupy a high position or a key role in the company was very low. Indeed, the European governors of the oil company believed that indigenous people were not qualified enough to occupy technical and official posts. Therefore, they employed the majority of capable workers from abroad (Sa'edy, 1995). A seventy year old, ex-worker of the oil industry explains:

*"Our wage and benefits, pension and social services were low in comparison with foreigners. Only a small number of Iranian employees that had previously been supported by central government or who were kin and relatives of the Bakhtiari tribal chiefs, could benefit from some facilities and get a better position in the company"* (Source: Field notes).

As, a 75 years old man, an ex-worker of the Oil Company stated:

*"In fact, a real discrimination applied over employees by the Oil Company governors. We, the indigenous workers were excluded by foreign managers, We were never allowed access to technical and modern equipment"*. (Source: Interview Notes)

The majority of indigenous people were in a low status occupations. Consequently they could not gain access to several social benefits and services. In fact, people had been categorised in using public transportation, stores, sports and leisure centres (Sa'edy, 1995).

One of the citizens stated:

*"...Even in the hospital, some rooms were reserved for Europeans and nobody was allowed to enter but them"* (Source: Field notes).



Such a situation and experience of discrimination affected people's attitudes and cultural values and produced significant effects on various aspects of people's lives, such as family, education, and social relations.

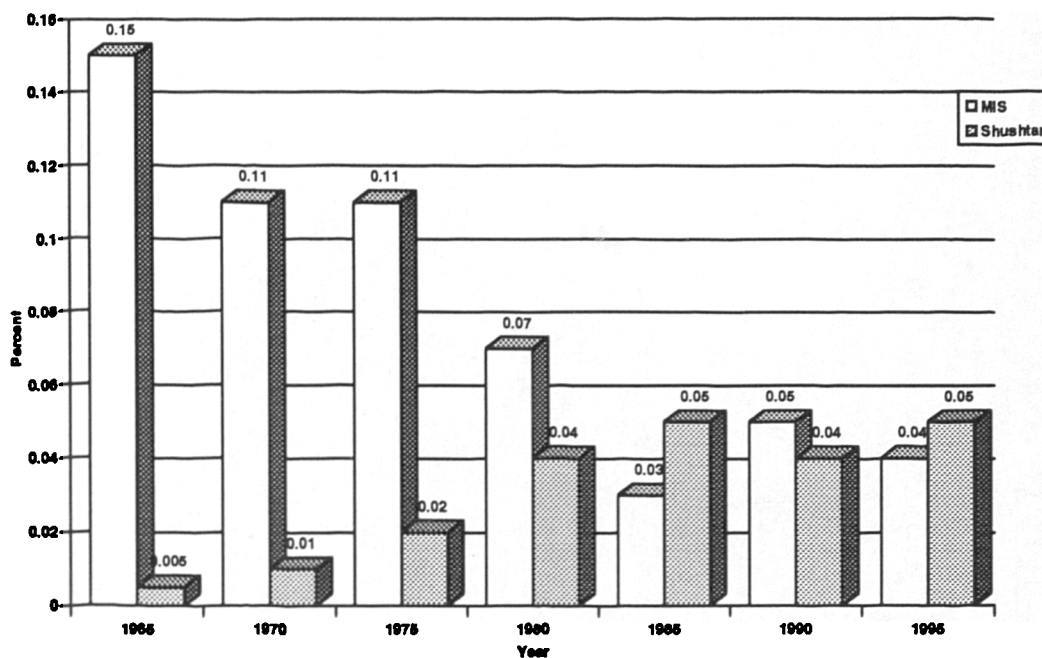
### **The Family Structure**

In such situations, the family structure was seriously affected by new attitudes and new social relations. Many families were broken up just because of new habits and behaviour as a result of new Western attitudes and cultural liberalism that emphasised individual freedom from "constraints" such as religion or traditions, moral values, even family norms and obligations. Destroying the family structure had a serious potential impact on moral and cultural values, because, as already argued, family is the first social institution for transmission of values and obligations (see Chapter 5). Also, the family was one of the most important generators of social relations among the Bakhtiari tribe, whilst stability of the family supports the members of the family and protect them in challenging with new values.

The ratio of the number of marriages and divorces can be used as a suitable indicator of the stability of family. We compare this figure for MIS with Shushtar, a more traditional and religious city close to MIS, to find out the condition of the family in these two cities during the last three decades (Fig. 8.4)

As the Figure 8.4 shows, the ratio of divorces to the marriages, in MIS, was higher than in Shushtar, in the period before the Islamic revolution. Also, this difference is considerable in the earlier years of 1960s. It might be said that during 1960s and 1970s and probably before that, the structure of the family in MIS suffered from different effects of rapid modernisation as well as the eclipse of traditional and religious values. But, this figure for MIS is comparable with Shushtar in the recent years. Despite the very serious cultural conflict the evidence suggests the old culture has lived on to provide cohesion in a new context, and our findings of the survey also shows this.

**Fig 8.4 The Ratio of the number of Divorces to Marriages in MIS and Shushtar: 1965-1995**



Source: The Plan and Budget Organisation of Iran, 1995

Overall, it can be said that the structure of the family in MIS is relatively strong and stable. This, the stability of the family, is a significant point that should be considered in determining social capacity, together with tribal and citizen relations in MIS.

### Education

Education, as one of the most important socio-economic institutions in the modern world, found its key function in the rapid growth of the oil industry as well as the social and economic relations in the period of after the discovery of oil in MIS.

From a cultural point of view, the prestigious man in MIS was not someone who had a high education level or qualifications of the western knowledge and skills; rather he needed to learn and also behave with some western customs such as treatment of food and water, drinking, fashion clothing and so on. It means an educated man was first a western civilised and then scientific qualified person (Sa'edy, History of MIS, 1995).

The kind of behaviour expected of him varied with the nature of the situation defined by the extent to which western agencies, or other well educated and westernised people were involved. That meant that at work or in the street or at an official reception, for example, he should behave in a “modern” way while in his own home and family circle his action might be “traditional”. In other words most educated people were western in public and traditional in their private life.

In terms of economic benefits, the amount of earnings, in the oil company, was determined by the average “education” required by each member of the particular occupation. It was education which largely determined the place of the people in the lower as well as higher economic and, consequently, social hierarchy

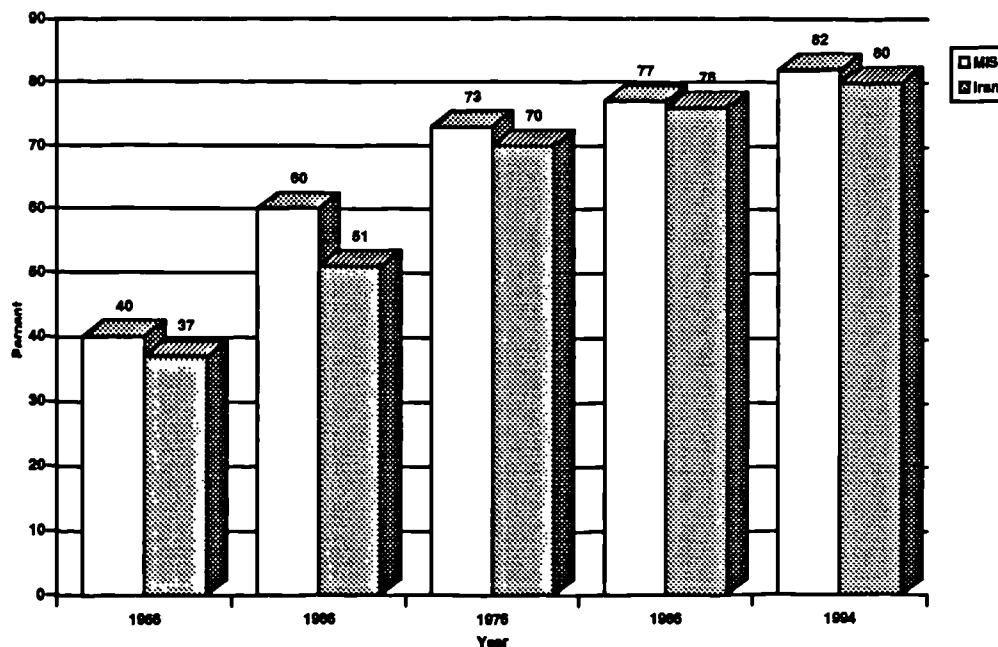
Overall, education itself being of general importance, the more advanced the educational qualification (for example, a university degree), the higher a person was rated. Furthermore, an individual’s ability to communicate in the English language made him eligible for a senior-service post (Sa’edy, 1995).

However, on the one hand, the company needed well-educated Iranian workers, on the other hand, the Iranian government gave a considerable attention to the oil sector and tried to force the company to involve more Iranians in technical and management positions, because, they were strongly criticised by the opposition, for the agreement between Iran and British Petroleum (Ferrier, 1982).

As a result, a good deal of attention was paid by both the OC and the Iranian government in the education sector in the city. In 1923, the first education centre was established in order to provide a training course for the OC technical employees. This centre was developed in 1929. The first Iranian primary school was founded to educate employees’ children, in 1927. At the same time some courses, were opened for adult education. For this reason, in terms of education, MIS has become one of the most developed cities in the country. Some time after the discovery of oil, the rate of educated people in MIS became more than national average for urban regions (Fig 8.4). This difference has been mentioned in the empirical part of this study (see Fig. 6.3 and Fig. 6.25 in Chapter 6). So, this high proportion of educated and technically

qualified citizens should be considered as an important factor in the future regeneration of MIS.

**Fig 8.5 The Percentages of Educated People (more than 4 years schooling)**



Source: POI (1994) The Indicators of Urban Development in Iran's Cities

As the Figure shows MIS has had a good potential of educated people in comparison with the national average. In the 1950s and 1960s there was a clear gap between the percentages of educated people and the national average. But for some reasons, such as the migration of educated people from the city after the decline of the oil industry, the in-migration of unqualified people to MIS, mostly from rural areas, and the catching up of the other parts of Iran, this gap has been reduced. Nevertheless, this figure is still considerable as a major source of human capital in MIS.

#### 8.2.4 Cultural Transformation

Redfield and Singer (1954), categorised colonial cities into two main groups, in accordance with the role they play in cultural change. They referred *orthogenetic* to the role of cities in which culture is continued, and *heterogenetic* to cities where local culture are disintegrated and new integration of mind and society are developed.

One of the main characteristics of the heterogenetic city, as defined by Redfield and Singer, is that it provides an environment in which local culture is disintegrated and new integration of attitudes and norms are developed. It is often suggested that the Western-oriented city, in the colonial framework, is a type of cultural circumstances in which indigenous cultural values are undermined and newer Western-oriented values emerge. The interesting question raises as could such hetrogenetic cities change their cultural roles and contribute to the formation of a civilisation based on indigenous culture, after political independence?

The cultural evolution of the MIS society shows that, with the discovery of oil in 1908, a significant role was given to the city, not only as an economic centre but also as a place for emerging a new culture.

Generally, the traditional culture contains a set of stable beliefs, customs and attitudes recognised as accepted practical values in society. Such values are visible in most aspects of people's life such as economy, politics or recreation. Whilst the modern culture is a belief in the good life of consumer durable, and calculates a favourable balance between exports and imports or cost and benefits (Walton J., 1984). In fact, individualism and preference maximisation, liberal society and rational economy were the main characteristics of the western world and consequently in MIS. These generated benefits in terms of material wealth and social welfare, but they also created social tensions and cultural transformation in the society.

The situation in MIS, was a good example of a cross-cultural experience in a colonial city. It was a cultural confrontation between traditional and modern systems of values. In such a challenge, all important elements and implementation power were in the hands of modernists. This means that all significant economic, political, technical and even geographic positions had previously been occupied by just one side, the foreigners. The Oil Company was run by the Western people, so the highest positions of that company were reserved for their own, because of their technical and scientific superiority. The foreigners were employers and the local people were employees.

In such unequal opportunities, the traditional culture had to resist and struggle for survival. Almost all indigenous people were Bakhtiari-Muslims with a high

commitment to their own religious beliefs, values, and traditions. The dominant unsuitable conditions for life, such as the relationship between employee and employer, and some formal regulations in the work environment, such as using special uniform, forced people to adapt themselves with new habits and behaviour. That was the first step of withdrawal of their beliefs and values. Over time, the impacts and domination of Western culture as a formal culture extended and affected more aspects of people's life (Sa'edy, 1995).

Indeed, everything in the city was run according to the western-orientation, norms, and rules. Work relations and environment, leisure time and contents, shopping stores and their products, communication facilities in particular cinema, housing area and architecture, all were planned, designed and controlled by foreigners while illustrating the contrast and tension between the two cultures.

The indigenous people were no longer self-sufficient producers any more, rather they became employed by others and consumed both materials and cultural products. The culture of self-sufficiency was replaced with the new method of wage-earning. Agriculture and animal breeding were abandoned and working as a simple worker or military-guard in new industrial units started. Indeed, everything changed, there was a new life style, westernised consumption pattern, new leisure facilities and even modern relationships formed (Local Authority of MIS, 1994).

In such situations, many people from other parts of the country and even other Asian nations, particularly Indians, were attracted to MIS to get a job and money for a "better life". Interaction and conflicts among such various culture occurred; similarity, differences and in some cases contradictions were visible. Because of the same religious and nationality bases, the differences between Bakhtiari people and other Iranians were not very serious, although they had slightly different traditions. The main challenges and conflicts were between indigenous people's beliefs and values in general, and a set of new values and behaviour called modern or Western culture.

### **Cultural Conflict between the indigenous citizens**

The domination of western culture on the economic, political and environmental life of the city, and also the creation of a broad and strong communication system (media) in the city to support this culture and its outcomes, influenced indigenous people in two different ways. On the one hand, many people, mostly the elderly, stood and supported their own cultural traditions. They did not like to change their life style, customs and values to what western culture prescribed. On the other hand some people, mostly young were attracted to the new culture and its outcomes. They ignored their own values, beliefs and obligations. They changed their attitudes toward the world and the environment by which they were surrounded, and behaved according to them.

This cultural conflict between the indigenous, together with economic, social and environmental differences, broke down socio-cultural relations and produced more social segregation in the city. Such a cultural conflict undermined the family structure and kinship as well as the tribal relations. A 50 years old man says:

“We had a big problem with our children, they did not listen to us, they did not respect the traditions and customs, and even religious values and norms. They enjoyed western life-style, wearing jeans, going to cinema and night clubs, gambling and so on. We had always conflicts at home” (Source: Field Notes).

In order to benefit from the maximum possible support of the Bakhtiari Tribe in a political economy situation, and also for the prevention of any social movement in the area, the Oil Company established a new firm called the Bakhtiari Oil Company. That firm was recognised, nominally, as a partner of the AIOC. Under the agreement between BP and some of the tribal chiefs (Khan(s)), AIOC occupied all the lands in the area and Bakhtiari people were employed as the security guards of the lands. Most of the benefits of the agreement was for a few chiefs and masters in order to provide security in the area. This economic and political agreement was another reason for the increasing separation between the people, leading to break down of their social solidarity and unity (Sa'edy, 1995).

Such social segregation and discrimination based on occupational classification forced people to follow the way of life which involved the breaking down of shared cultural values. Many people gradually became integrated by its acceptance of Western attitudes, and broke away from the more traditional values.

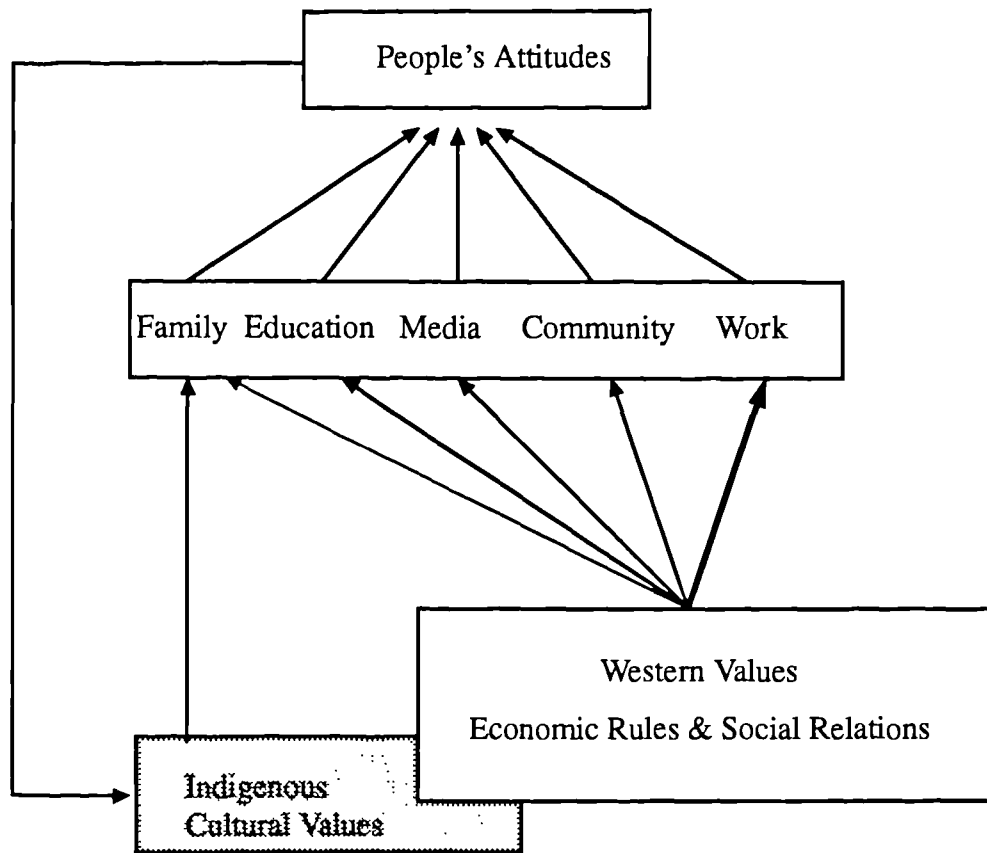
### **An Ideal Model of the Cultural Transformation**

As explained, it might be said that, in MIS, during the period of the development of the oil industry, most significant dimensions and elements of urban life as described in the model of the city as culture, were controlled and directed by the dominant western culture and norms. These new norms and values attempted to adapt people's cultural values and traditions to prepare a suitable environment for the growth of modern culture, compatible with modern economy.

In this model, socio-economic changes may influence individuals' attitudes. As long as there is no contradiction between such attitudes and the cultural values, they might direct an individual's perception and his (or her) action. In MIS during the period of foreign domination, a serious conflict between cultural values derived from traditions and religion on the one side, and Western values based on their own culture and economic benefits occurred. Individuals' attitudes towards the new urban life were shaped through the challenge between such values. Family structure, the education system, the world of work and the living place have had a significant role in this new order. The role of media, in this period, has not been as significant as it became later. Cinema as the most effective media was directed by the OC for spreading and supporting western culture. These socio-cultural interactions can be described in an ideal model, illustrated in Fig 8.6.

During the domination of the British Petroleum Company over the oil industry in Iran and particularly in MIS, all urban outcomes and facilities were controlled by the foreigners and under Western culture and values. It seems that during the early years of the development of the oil industry in MIS, a considerable cultural confrontation occurred.



**Fig 8.6 The confrontation of the indigenous cultural values and modern attitudes**

It can be claimed that western culture during its domination changed people's attitudes towards various aspects of life, such as family relationships, educational content, recreation, the new wage-system of work, and a western type of accommodation. All these together were consistent with the western culture. Probably family relationships and tribal relations, were the two elements of people's lives which struggled to sustain traditions and their cultural values. Nevertheless, even family and tribal relationships, were affected by western values (Local Authority of MIS, 1995, PBO, 1994).

On the other hand, time has played a significant role in this story. The longer the domination, the more the cultural effects. Undoubtedly, as has happened in many colonial countries, the long period of economic and political domination can lead to cultural changes in the local society. In other words, attitude changes, in a long time scale, will lead to changes in cultural values.

Conclusively, it might be said that the western culture accompanied with the capitalist economy during 50 years domination over MIS broke down the connection between the socio-economic institutions and people's (Bakhtiari's) cultural values. This brought about two major consequences: firstly, cultural transformation from the traditional values to western norms; secondly, socio-economic and cultural conflict between the indigenous people among themselves. These cultural changes and conflicts served to undermine social solidarity and cultural cohesion; in contrast social segregation and differentiation in the city increased. This is the main point that this part of research tries to highlight; i.e., the exhaustion of the oil fields has not been the only reason for socio-economic decline in MIS, rather the decline of MIS had started many years ago, when the Oil Company came to the city. This means that the criteria for urban decline should shift from only focusing on economic and demographic changes to an integrated approach which consider moral and cultural aspects of social life as well as material benefits.

From a conceptual viewpoint, such a cultural transformation is a result of continuous interaction between the people as individuals and the society. Indeed, society however, does not grow by itself but can take shape by individuals' conscious efforts only. On the other hand these individuals are affected and formed by the rules, norms and values dominated in the society.

Overall, three significant events stopped and then reversed the domination of western culture upon the traditional one in MIS. The first economic-political event was the movement which led to the nationalisation of the oil industry under the leadership of Dr. Mosaddeq, in 1951.

The second important economic event was the exhaustion of MIS's oil resources (see Figures in Chapter 2). This significant event changed everything in the city. In fact, the life of the city was completely dependant on the oil industry; and such a major economic event threatened all activities in the city. Of course, this economic decline stopped almost all urban projects and policies promoting cultural changes. These new conditions affected the attractiveness and socio economic position of MIS, among the residents and also the other Iranian people.

The third major event influencing the contemporary period in MIS was the emergence of the Islamic Revolution in the country. This significant socio-cultural and political event also caused considerable changes in the country and consequently in MIS.

### **Nationalisation of the oil industry**

As already explained, in Chapter one, the movement of the nationalisation of the oil industry led to the cancellation of the agreement between the British Petroleum company and the state of Iran.

In 1951, after a political fight of several years, Dr. Mosaddeq, Ayatollah Kashani and their sympathisers won a great political victory over the Shah. This victory put the Shah in the worst political situation. Inevitably, he left the country, and the new state under the power of Dr. Mosaddeq formed. But, this famous victory was not sustained for long. In 1953, under the pre-planned military intervention, directed by the US government, the new state of Iran was removed, Mosaddeq was imprisoned and the Shah returned to Iran. However, the oil industry stayed nationalised (Wilber, 1963; Keddie, 1980).

These major political movements in the country eclipsed the socio-cultural fruits of the nationalisation of the oil industry. The beginning of this period coincided with the beginning of the political domination of America over the Middle-East region, in particular Iran. Iran's regime under the Shah's power facilitated and supported the socio-economic presence of the US within the country. These new cultural circumstances regenerated western culture and social relations in the society of MIS (Amirsadeghi, 1977; Keddi, 1980). In fact, after nationalisation of the oil industry, almost all foreign employees of the oil company left Iran. The situation changed. But, because of the domination of new American culture upon the country supported by the Shah of Iran, that major event could not remove western culture from people's lives (Bamberg, 1994). The foreigners had gone, but their culture had remained and was supported by the government.

### **8.3 The Period of Oil Exhaustion (Decline Period)**

Some years after the nationalisation of the oil industry the oil resources of the MIS field dramatically exhausted, in 1966. The good economic days finished and the new situation in the absence of oil began. Most activities of the Oil Company dramatically declined, the number of employees sharply decreased, many small industries related to the oil industry were closed, and the days of economic decline started (see Chapter 2).

Although the economic and executive domination of the western people did not continue, the socio-economic institutions and their manifestation in older layers of the built environment of the city still existed; i.e., the dominant role of British Petroleum on the oil industry had been removed, but the western rules and regulation still remained. The most important indication of this era was the rapid growth of the city and the high immigration rate from rural areas to the city. In fact, nationalisation of the oil industry mostly opposed the economic domination of the British Petroleum company over the oil resources of Iran, and MIS. But this nationalist movement did not cause significant change in the socio-cultural institutions and in consequence in the cultural values; i.e., it was just a replacement of foreigners with westernised Iranians at the top of oil industry. Indeed, the western culture which had initially been introduced in MIS between 1910 and 1950 by Europeans, was now promoted by Americans and more importantly was supported by the Iranian government in the national context, between 1950 to 1980. In this era, the cultural conditions in MIS became a part of a socio-cultural transformation which was happening in the country under the Shah's policy for westernising Iran and undermining traditions. This condition continued until the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, in 1980.

#### **The Period After the Islamic Revolution**

The Islamic revolution in Iran changed every thing, in social and cultural aspects, quickly and significantly. In MIS, like other parts of the country, the direction of all urban facilities and activities reversed from supporting western culture to the domination of the Islamic cultural and religious values. After the Islamic revolution, there were some tensions as people wanted to "switch back" from a western mode to

the Islamic-Iranian one. For example in political terms the high pressure of the dictatorial Shah regime, in economic terms, the exhaustion of the oil resources and the high rate of unemployment and deprivation; in social terms the huge gap between different classes and the obvious discrimination in society, and more importantly the new appearance of a powerful religious values, derived from Islam, all together caused a rapid cultural shift in MIS. In fact, people in MIS have experienced two significant cultural transformations this century.

All urban elements found their new role to prompt, and to protect cultural values in society, traditions were respected and revived. So, the model of cultural transformation in MIS changed from a western to the Islamic-Iranian form. Now, in the context of the city, family, education, work, media and community are consistent and in harmony with each other, as main parts of public policy.

The work relations were completely reversed from the one-way domination of the employer to the supported powerful employees. Most rules and regulations of the oil industry bureaucracy have been changed. Many top positions of the highly ranked officers were awarded to the low-ranked employees. Western and high bureaucratic work regulations were replaced with the new relations based on cultural values.

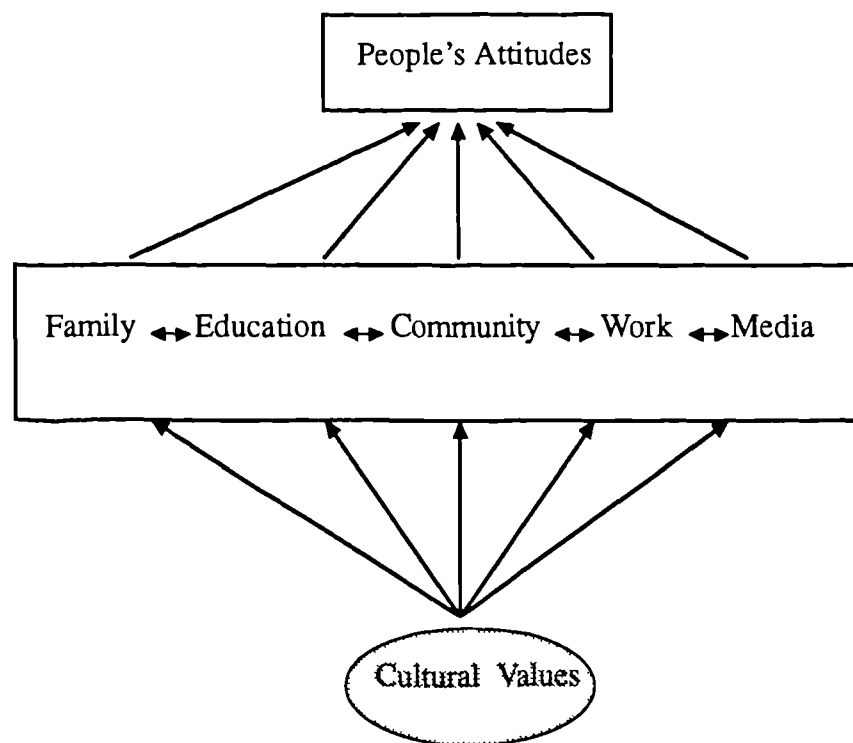
In physical and environmental aspects, the ownership and domination of the Oil Company over lands was invalidated. This new situation brought about some disturbance and disorderly activities in urban development, such as a rapid immigration from rural areas to MIS and the building of thousands of houses without plan and permission.

At the same time, housing stratification has been removed. The general facilities of all existing houses have become relatively the same, while all employees have been allowed to occupy accommodation regardless of their rank and occupation. Different shopping stores have been joined together and all employees (still not all residents) could benefit from them equally. Such equal rights in almost all other aspects of urban life have been promoted; in education, in health service, in transportation facilities and so on. Nevertheless, in terms of some basic facilities, such as housing, the distance between the oil company sites and the other parts of the city was obvious.

The complete support of family by government and the provision of some facilities for young people to establish new families, together with a high respect for family values in social relations led to a great improvement in the stability of the family in MIS (see Fig 8.5, the rate of divorce in 1986).

Furthermore, after the Islamic revolution social relations and traditions were empowered. Traditional Islamic-Iranian customs and norms which had been eclipsed by western values have been revived and reinforced. As a consequence, people's attitudes towards the world, their environment, job, family and social relations have been shaped according to their cultural values. People's life style suddenly changed from a westernised to the Islamic (Sa'edy, 1994). This new situation and socio-cultural interaction is illustrated in an ideal model (Fig. 8.7).

**Fig 8.7 Cultural Values, Transmitters and People's Attitudes in Post-Islamic Revolution**



According to this model, a positive interaction exists between the growth of moral values and the extent of family solidarity. There is also a positive relationship between family solidarity and educational achievements. This means that the strength

of family structure and the harmony between home and school leads to the education of children in the best possible way to achieve educational objectives in both moral and academic aspects.

The findings in the empirical part of this research show that the connection between people's cultural values and their new attitudes does exist in people's minds in MIS. The people respect their culture, traditions and their city. They have a great potential for participation to build their city. They enjoy helping each other, in particular the young and relatives, to establish a new small firm or find a job. There are strong social relations between the residents which are rooted in their cultural and tribal background. Urban regeneration strategies in MIS need to understand that a great social potential exists based on the cultural values and traditions of local residents. Also, the considerable body of educated and skilful citizens, as human resources, should be considered as one of the most important factors in the re-building of MIS. These two significant social characteristics could assist us for further investigation and developing urban policy to tackle urban decline in MIS. This is the task of the next chapter.

One of the most significant points in the life of MIS, is that during 80 years of its life, before the recent efforts (through a master plan, 1992) to study the situation of the city by the Islamic government, there has no been real consideration for the future of the city. Nobody, in the last 80 years, made a plan or programme for the life of the city. The development outlook and socio-economic prospective of MIS has never been studied. And, of course this is one of the most obvious reasons of the existing situation in the city.

Indeed, during the early years of the Islamic revolution, people struggled to remove all western symbols from their lives, although this could not be achieved, because of many overlaps between the two cultures. Nowadays, the idea of the acceptance of such overlaps, and some parts of western development which are not in contradiction with the traditional cultural values, is dominant.

Furthermore, nowadays a real tension has appeared in the city. This tension is not based on cultural conflicts and class differences. Rather, the reason for such a

tension is rooted in the economic shortages, unemployment and deprivation. On the one side cultural and moral values, shared backgrounds, traditions and interests, and in a word values, and on the other side economic problems, material benefits and shortages, and individual interests. People would like to stay in their city because of their traditions, but they could not because of their economic needs.

## 8.6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the evolution of culture and its connection to people's attitudes and their economic conditions in the particular circumstances of MIS.

As a conclusion, it might be said that, MIS was the place where the past traditions met the present modernism, the indigenous met the foreigners, and economic power caused socio-cultural changes. During about half a century of economic and socio-cultural domination of the Western company upon the city of MIS, residents' cultural values and their traditional interests have been affected by their socio-economic environment, but the following points should be carefully considered in this regard.

First, such influences were not inevitable. The power of new cultural values depends on the sustainability and comprehensiveness of the original cultural values. Second, in fact what is important in social life, is the capacity and ability of the society to generate individual action and social movements. Such a power appeared in individuals' lives as the synthesis of their attitudes, and their original cultural values, which may be called "absolute values", derived from their nature as human beings, their religion and their traditions. The result of the synthesis of cultural values and attitudes is presumed as the driving force of social mobilisation which may be called as "operational values"; i.e., the values which indicate the aim and the way of acting, and the values which drive people to act.

To explain cultural transformation, it is possible to assume a baby who survived as the only member of an African tribe with their own special traditions. If this baby is



guarded and educated by an American family, for example, what will be happen after 20 years? Evidently, we can not see such a person as a member of his original tribe with his own traditions and values. Rather he will find a new culture in accordance with his new environment and circumstances in which he has been educated. Of course some values such as truth, justice and so on will appear with him in any condition, because they are rooted in his nature as a human being; as the lowest *layer* of his culture. We can develop this debate that other layers of culture including religion, traditions and attitudes need some means and conditions to be generated, grown and transmitted. Culture cannot exist by itself. As already discussed, the main sources of culture are: human nature, religion, traditions and perhaps social rules and written law. This study, concentrates on family, education system, communication, work and community as the significant transmitters of culture.

We also discussed that culture consists of different layers which are inter-related. In Chapters 5 and 7, we presented the model of the culture building. On the surface of the culture building we can find people's attitudes. Attitudes are those immediate opinions and perceptions which individuals have towards a phenomenon which direct him to take particular action. Such attitudes are based on individuals' cultural values as well as their socio-economic conditions. Both attitudes and cultural values shape people's behaviours and actions. But, the important differences between the two are: firstly, that the cultural values are much deeper than attitudes. Cultural values are rather stable; and they change very slowly. Third, attitudes are concerned with the existing people, whilst cultural values are related to the past generations. It can be said that if attitudes can survive for a long time and become shared between generations, they will be part of the cultural values of the people; i.e., the old values are replaced with the new one.

The significant point is that such attitudes are shaped by the basic cultural values only if their transmitters (the socio-economic institutions), act in accordance with the cultural values consistently, i.e. the transmitters really transmit the original values and support them. In other words, original cultural values will be marginalised if the family, education, work, living place and the media follow new routes, separate from original

values. This argument can explain the process of westernisation of all societies, in particular developing societies like MIS.

It has also been explained that the contemporary development of MIS resulted from the discovery of oil and the expansion of capitalist enterprise in the area. We considered some aspects of the social effects of these processes and noted among other things that economic growth involved, on the one hand job creation, increasing income and immigration to the city; and on the other hand it led in the direction of socio-cultural changes.

The condensed review of urban evolution of MIS showed that 80 years ago, the city of MIS was regenerated (*re-established*) as a modern settlement in the heart of an undeveloped region of Iran, by western people. At the beginning of discovering oil, MIS was designed and formed as a company town. After a while, it became a developed urbanised settlement. In this concern, it should be noted that, although urbanisation and development are frequently connected and urbanisation is seen as the pre-requisite for development, urbanisation does not necessarily cause development. The reverse causal relationship is quite possible (Gugler J., 1988).

The essence of our debate here, is that the existing problems and urban decline in MIS are not only because of the exhaustion of oil resources in the area. Rather, the most significant reason, was the breaking down of the social and cultural solidarity of the people, which led to changes in the characteristics of the residents. In fact, during about half a century of domination by western culture and the capitalist economy over the city, the residents of MIS were used as instruments for the extraction of economic benefits by foreign investors. They had gradually been excluded from their rich culture and traditions. They had changed from being producing and active self-sufficient people of their past to become consumers and passive wage earner. Indeed, in that period, the connection between people's attitudes and their cultural values had been broken down. Because, almost all the transmitters and socio-economic institutions served and supported the western culture and its outcomes instead of people's original cultural values.

As a conclusion of this chapter, we shall combine the findings of the empirical part of the research with some of the author's personal observations from the field as well as the interpretation based on the conceptual parts of the research.

Overall, it can be said that during about half a century of domination by the British Petroleum Company upon oil resources of MIS:

- Western culture could affect some parts of the traditions and religious beliefs of the local people. The main causes of this impact were the economic and technical domination of Western people over the oil industry and in consequence over people's lives.
- The impact of Western culture on the young was much more than on older people of MIS. That was itself a cause for social tensions and conflicts among families. In some cases family structure was destroyed. That also was a big obstacle for new family establishment.
- Occupational classification in both the work environment and the living area and the type of accommodation were other important causes of social segregation and a serious obstacle for people's integration.
- Changing people's beliefs and values, particularly the young, led to change their attitudes toward the world and that again caused social segregation and undermined the unity in the society.

After the Islamic revolution, although economic picture of the city has not significantly improved, an obvious change has occurred in the socio-cultural characteristics of the society. As the findings of the empirical part of the research and my personal experience show:

- At present, people in MIS talk to each other in their own accent. They like their own traditions such as songs, dress and customs very much. They are religious people who believe in God and follow His orders.
- Cultural and moral values are strongly supported by socio-economic institutions. People are stimulated to comply and also protect their traditions. Now, there is no difference between formal and private cultural values, they

are, all based on people's beliefs and backgrounds. Moral values and religious commitment have found their original serious role in people's lives.

- The family structure and its stability is in the reasonable condition. Extended family relationships are quite strong and it could be a good advantage for co-operation.
- The education system and its environment, in a suitable way and contents, educate and protect such values and norms, but not sufficiently. Media, such as press, radio, and television, also playing their important role to spread the values among the society.
- The residents love their own land and many of them, wish to stay there even under unfavourable condition (see Chapter 6).
- Social solidarity in the city is based on three main kinds of social relations: the family, the tribe and citizenship, accompanied by the religious values. Such social relations play an important role in urban life.
- The high rate of educated and skilled people provide an adequate knowledge capacity for economic development.

These new socio-cultural conditions have provided a good opportunity for close and compatible attitudes among people. That means we can observe a high potential for unity and integration among the society under such new conditions, as has already appeared in the model. We can benefit from such a unity to stimulate people for serious participation in public policies and schemes for urban regeneration. Now, a substantial challenge is taking place, cultural and moral values, shared backgrounds, traditions and interests, and in a word values on the one side, and economic problems, material benefits and individual interests on the other side. What should be done for such a city in conflict? Is it possible to resolve this conflict and combine both moral values and economic benefits together? We shall answer these questions in the next chapter of this study.

# 9

## **The Strategic Policy Approach**

### **Introduction**

This study aimed to show how cultural values could be employed as an effective driving force of urban regeneration policies. In the preceding parts of this research, an alternative approach to urban regeneration has been presented followed by an explanation of culture and the role of cultural values in urban life. In the case study area we communicated with the residents to understand their cultural values and also explore the role of these values in their lives. In the last chapter, we re-defined the problem of MIS, and also identified both the existing human and material resources of the city.

This chapter intends to make a linkage between ideas and the action, between theory and practice. We wish to show how the proposed alternative approaches to urban regeneration and cultural values can be applied in the case study area and produce an effective urban regeneration policy. The chapter is divided into three sections. A very brief review of the conceptual approach of the research is drawn in section One. Section Two explains the meaning, process and the structure of policy making activity. This section also deals with the goals, strategies and key elements of policy making. The recommended policies will be drawn out in the last section of the chapter.

## 9.1 Reviewing the alternative approach

In the present research we started with identification of the problem (see Chapter 2), explaining existing well-known theories and policies (see Chapter 3), and then tried to develop an alternative concept to understand the problem more precisely as well as to find a theoretical foundation for planning activities. (see Chapter 4). To know the key elements for policy making we developed our concept in the context of the city and urban life (see Chapter 5). Now, we wish to bring all our findings together to outline a planning process which would produce a set of strategic policies for urban regeneration in MIS. This will help to clarify the way of understanding the problem and the method for identification of the possible solutions. Overall, what we have so far obtained through this investigation can be summarised as follow.

1. The terms “development” and also “regeneration” are not limited to economic development, and upgrading the standards of living such as employment, health, education figures and so on. Instead, in this study, these terms have been defined as multidimensional notions, mostly focused on accompanying socio-cultural and economic improvement. This means, on the one hand, that we are concerned to know how to improve people’s quality of life. And on the other, the quality of life is a matter of both material conditions and cultural values, i.e., we need to understand first, how can we support and promote cultural values as the basis of human life, and second, we should consider economic growth and social welfare in the city.
2. People’s culture, as the way of thinking and acting based on their shared values and systems of meaning has been identified as the basis of people’s urban life. People have been recognised as the centre of planning activities. People’s attitudes are based on both their cultural values and their socio-economic conditions. This means that people’s participation and their involvement is necessary for both policy making and its achievement. So we need to make plans and decisions “with” people rather than “for” them.
3. This research emphasises that unified and strong cultural values within society can generate social unity and desirable social relations. It is also

claimed that such a dominant unified culture exists in the MIS society, despite its experience of major cultural transformation and confrontation. This cultural cohesion and strong social relations in the city can be a considerable rich human capacity which can be used for development purposes.

4. This approach emphasises a continuous interaction between people and planning processes. Planning influences people's lives while how people respond to planning helps to change it too. Planning policy achievement needs participation of all parts of the society, agents and agencies and, in particular, ordinary citizens. Planning activity attempts to create good relations between all parts at different levels, in order to create trust and understanding among them together with provision of sufficient support for policies and strategies for obtaining material benefit and developing moral values at the same time.
5. Urban regeneration strategy in this approach considers cultural values development together with economic and environmental improvement. It is stressed that the target of planning action should be the development of the human resources in the city. Human beings could be resources of both material and cultural development in the city. This assumes social, economic and environmental development of societies is the consequence of their human development and changes in their system of reasoning.
6. The "human-capacity building" planning is a dynamic interactive process consisting of developing multiple aims about and for cultural human development. The first task of a planning activity is to understand and explore shared values and similarities among society. The second task is to provide a suitable environment for shared cultural values to flourish through communication, education and motivation. As the third task, the planning process could understand and explore people's aspirations and seek to facilitate their realisation.

7. Family, education, work, community-neighbourhood and communication have been identified as the most important socio-economic institutions which are involved in the process of socio-cultural and economic changes. They have been identified as cultural transmitters.
8. The two most significant sources of human capacity in MIS are people's religion (Islam) and Bakhtiari traditions. Together with socio-economic conditions, religion and traditions shape private and social lives of MIS people. Social relations in the city, as a major source of human capacity, are mostly formed in accordance with the values derived from these two major forces in the society (religion and traditions).

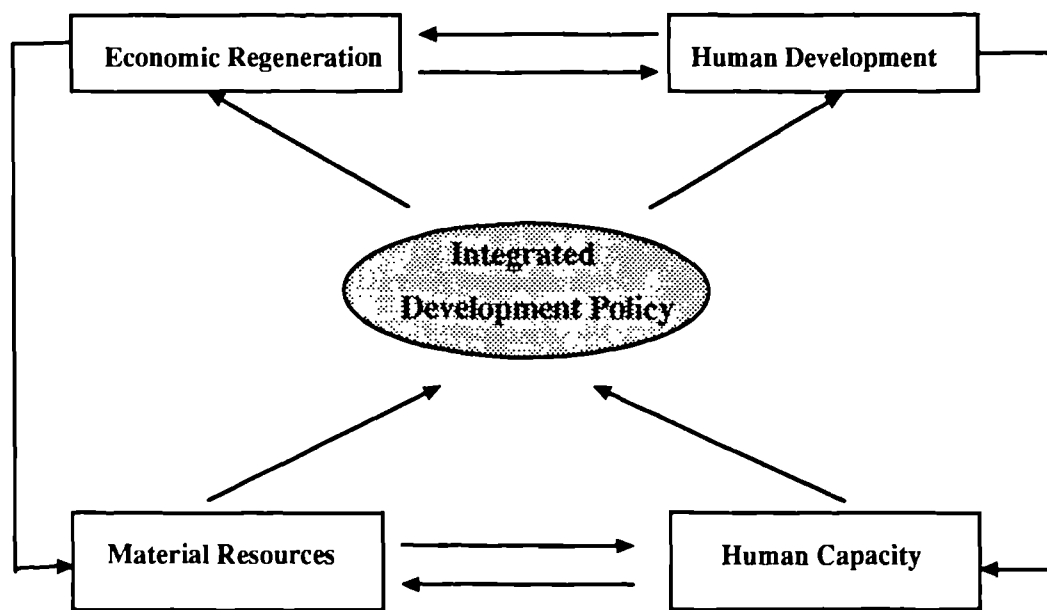
Having noted the above points, we identify the resources which are derived from these findings leading to the production of alternative policies.

### **9.1.1 The Resources of Development**

Generally, we have divided the resources of development into material resources and human capacity. The material resources are the capital which is normally used by public policy and decision makers to build the future of the society. The potential to change and increase the amount of this capital and to provide alternatives is not very high and effective, particularly in a place like MIS. What is the concern of this research is human capital (resources). It might be said that the role of human resources in the processes of urban development and decline is more important than the material resources. Firstly because, it is human beings who can preserve or destroy the material resources, and secondly, as we have emphasised here, human life is not limited to material growth. Rather and more importantly, it is the moral and cultural dimensions of development that should be achieved. A serious consideration of the values and humanity is therefore necessary for such an achievement.

Therefore, we need an integrated model of development which considers both material and human capital for material and cultural development. Such a model is simplified in Fig 9.1.



**Fig 9.1 The Integrated Paradigm of Human Development & Economic Regeneration**

As the model shows, development policy should be built upon both the material resources and the human capacity. The combination of these two can generate the capacity to optimise using available resources. They can be referred to as the input of the plan. As the output, we would have material growth and social welfare, on the one hand, and the improvement of cultural values on the other hand. This is a dynamic model with vertical and horizontal interactions between the elements. This means that material resources are interrelated with human resources, i.e., the rich material resources can generate an adequate environment for the growth of human resources, and vice versa. An individual with an educated moral conscience can preserve the environment and employ the material resources more efficiently.

At the same time, the growth of moral and cultural values within society may increase the human capacity leading to the growth of human resources. The issue of human capacity has been developed through the alternative approach to social policy and planning (see Chapter 4).

It can be said that increasing the richness of social relations and improving local knowledge, as two sources of human capacity, in a unifying culture society, is much more achievable, than in multi-cultural and diverse societies. In a unified culture society, like MIS, efforts should be concentrated on improving social relations,

communication systems as well as accessibility to information. The crucial point is that local knowledge makes individuals' attitudes towards their lives come close together and decreases the conflicts and tensions caused by lack of information in the society. Such knowledge and relations have therefore, a considerable contribution in generating, improving and protecting social cohesion and social mobilisation in the city.

### **9.1.2 Social Capacity**

In MIS, we can observe strong social relations in the form of social networks and social institutions. The family, the tribe and the city are the key institutions which provide a favourable environment and circumstances for generating and developing social relations. The positive relations between the members of the family as the primary social structure are kinship based. In MIS, extended families still have a significant role in social life. Whilst the life style of the extended family, living in the same place, is not common in the city any more, the kinship and inter-relationship are very strong and stable. Family values and supporting each other are part of the personality of every member of the family. Thus, both nuclear and extended families act as some small web sites for social relations, and at the same time they are the base of other larger relational web sites.

The other common type of social relations in MIS is the tribal relationship. The Bakhtiari is a big nation in Iran. It consists of many small tribes. The origin of all these tribes are the same, while there are differences of interest. These small clans (sub-tribes of Bakhtiari), have their own family background and they have similar sorts of community-based relationship. They are strongly connected together and in many cases, marriages reinforce such connections. The social relations in these groups of people are strong and stable. They exchange their information, and understand the situation of each other very rapidly. It is very common for people to help each other when they are in trouble. One of the famous traditional customs in this level of social relations is the mutual feeling towards each other. It means that all members of the tribe feel an obligation to participate in celebrations and ceremonies and in particular to contribute to the provision of aid for the families in trouble or the young to establish their new family or new business.

The third type of social relations in the MIS's society is citizenship. As already explained, the residents of MIS have a strong emotional feeling about their city. In fact, they love their city and feel a considerable sympathy to it. Such a shared feeling together with the shared background and origin which only are identified by the existence of the city has led to the emergence of a large community as the citizens of MIS. This community is the basis of sustainable and powerful social capital in a wider extent. More or less, the residents know the problems of the city and the potential solutions. The latest information, changes of conditions are transferred quickly through this large social and relational web. These social ties are more visible outside MIS, in the region and other cities around the country. The people who were born in MIS, even ex-citizens of MIS living in other cities, find each other and constitute a new community quickly, based on citizenship.

These three types of dominant social relations in MIS have strong inter-relationships with other elements of urban life: work and education. Having this general idea of human capacity and the role of cultural values in this context, we aim to show how the proposed model of urban life can work efficiently for achieving the proposed socio-economic regeneration.

Following the above analysis of human capacity together with the clarification of the role of cultural values in urban regeneration, in a theoretical approach, we need an alternative policy implication to show the value of the research argument. The research intends to present a policy approach which can illustrate that people have a great potential for improving their socio-economic conditions, through an endogenous development strategy.

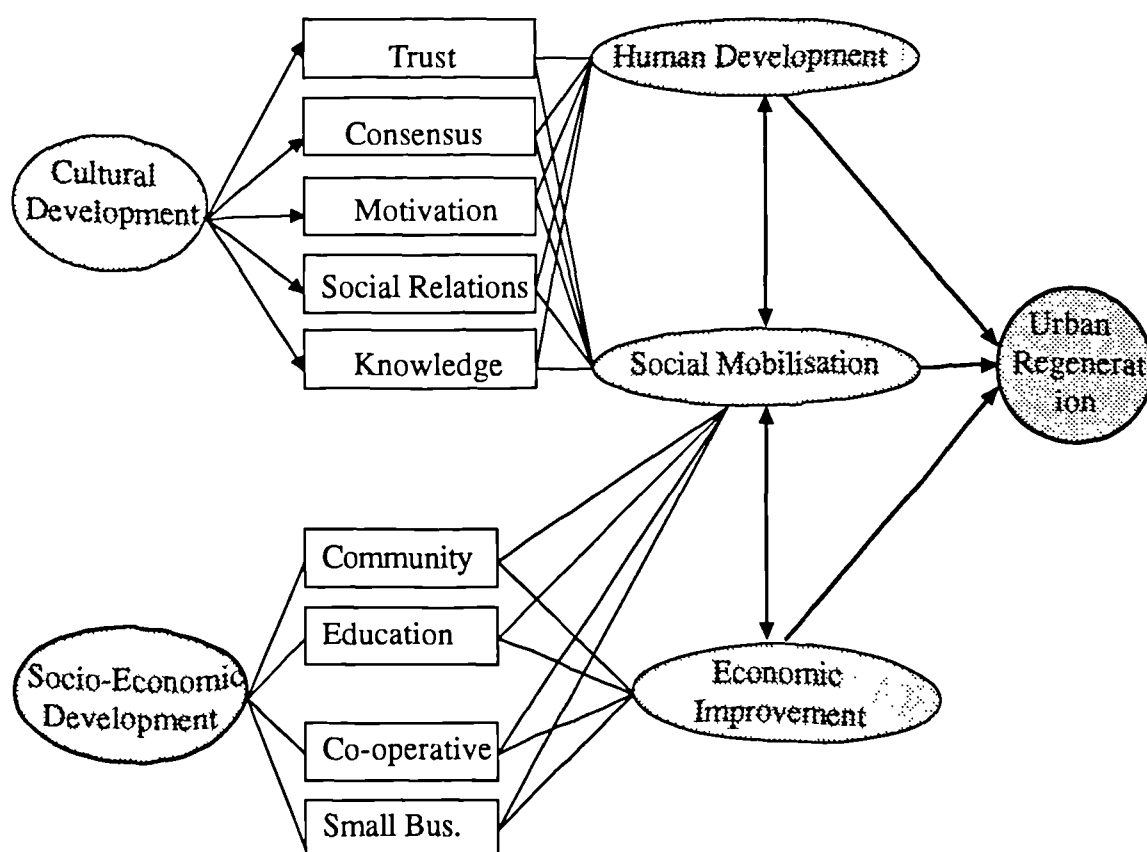
## 9.2 The Policy Implications

It is necessary to explain that the essence of this thesis is developing an approach to show how an urban problem should be identified, analysed and tackled. This means that the research concentrates more on the way and the stages of dealing with an urban problem rather than finding solutions in detail. In this way we try to show the connection between the conceptual and empirical parts of this process. Indeed, MIS is

used as an illustration of the approach. Of course, we would need to pay much more attention to this section of the research if the aim of research was prescribing policies for MIS alone.

With this respect, this section mostly seeks to present general policy principles and significant essential considerations which follow from our alternative approach with respect to a city such as MIS, rather than precise plans and programmes. Our policy recommendations are categorised in three groups: 1) socio-economic policies, 2) cultural policies, and 3) governmental issues. As mentioned earlier, people are the centre of all these strategic policies (Fig 9.2).

**Fig 9.2 Cultural and Socio-Economic Strategic Policies for Urban Regeneration**



As the diagram shows our proposed policy approach is divided into two main general groups of cultural and socio-economic. Cultural strategic (long-term) policies include improving trust, consensus, motivation, social relations and knowledge of local residents as the main target and capital for development. The main socio-economic strategic policies, for the case study area, are focused on community, education, co-operative sector and small businesses. As earlier mentioned improving and flourishing all these elements together, increases both social mobilisation and human development of the society in a systemic way. These two together with economic development are the sources and driving forces of regeneration of the city. Economic improvement, in this policy approach, is the result of the combination of social and economic policies. Social mobilisation as the most significant of cultural development, is a driving force for urban regeneration, while itself is influenced by economic conditions.

As emphasised earlier, there are strong relationships between all aspects of urban life. For this reason the different policies are not distinct from each other. Instead the policies recommended here are interconnected and have some common borders. However, for more clarification we classified the policies in different key elements which were already identified. The goals, strategies and key elements are the basis of proposed policies. It is important to note that all these goals, strategies and policies should be derived through people's values. What are presented here, are suggested in accordance with our understanding and interpretation of people's values. Therefore, they are only provisional ideas which should be evaluated and re-considered through communication with local people including all stakeholders.

### 9.2.1 The Goals

This research has emphasised both *human development* and *economic regeneration* as the most significant goals of public policies and planning strategies for quality of life. For us, economic growth and improvement of material conditions of urban life in the absence of humanity and moral values cannot create a quality of life for human beings. At the same time humanity and moral values cannot be created and flourish under economic difficulties and a situation of material hardship. This means we

need to target cultural and moral as well as economic and material aspects of urban life simultaneously (see Chapter 4,5).

The thesis also emphasises that *Social Mobilisation for Endogenous Development* is the possible outcome of cultural cohesion which can act as a driving force of socio-economic development. Social capacity (relations) together with intellectual capacity (knowledge) creates a great potential and capability in both society and individuals for causing changes and improving the quality of life. However, the improvement of social relations leads to the strengthening of social unity, and the improvement of intellectual capacity leads to the increasing of the capability of individuals. Both these two have already been targeted as urban regeneration strategies for human development, as the first goal. Social and intellectual capacity based on cultural values may lead to a generation of more social mobilisation in the society. This will produce a greater contribution, more participation and increasing co-operation in the society and between people and the government. And this would be the driving force of socio-economic regeneration, as the second goal of urban regeneration.

Following the above main goals emphasising human capacity development together with the clarification of the role of cultural values in urban regeneration, in a theoretical approach, we need an alternative policy to show the value of the research argument. The research intends to illustrate how a policy can be focused on people and increasing their involvement in the policy making. And also, how such a great potential can be implicated in the urban policy for improving their socio-economic conditions, through an endogenous development strategy. What are the main strategies to achieve these goals?

### 9.2.2 The Strategies

Two main strategies can be drawn through the conceptual discussion and the above goals which have been represented in the thesis. They are: *Community Development* and *Endogenous Development*.

### *Community Development*

It is crucial that communities must become a source of pride and support for their members. This research suggests that traditional and cultural values must be strengthened. Community development as a community-based approach to urban regeneration policy can support social relations, cultural values and economic improvements. To achieve community development we need to consider the following points. 1) Communicate with community members (local residents), consult with them and try to involve them in decision-making. 2) Recognition of all the social economic and cultural problems affecting the community, and bringing them together in policy making. 3) Providing access for residents to information, technical and professional assistance to understand and deal with the situation effectively, and 4) empowering the capacity of community members and improving their skills and qualifications through educational and training policies (Blackman, 1995). The present study suggests that community development can be used as an adequate strategy for human capacity development in the city. Community development as an integrated strategy can bring the capacity of individuals, families and communities close together and generate a strong driving force for cultural and economic development.

### *Endogenous Development*

The present study emphasises a clear shift away from a functionalist perspective of government as the active agency, local people as passive agency and places as the inactive location, to a new realistic and normative view of local people and places as active, constructive and effective elements of economic development. This thesis has realised that development is an endogenous change rather than exogenous. We emphasised the role and function of local residents as human capital and local material resources. At the same time, the interaction and influences of national and international economics should not be ignored. But, the locality and endogenous elements have been given priority. This means that development is subject to some external factors but it is not the necessary outcome of external factors (Garofoli, 1990). We should concentrate, in our urban policy, on local potential and capital and attempt to discover, create and improve them.

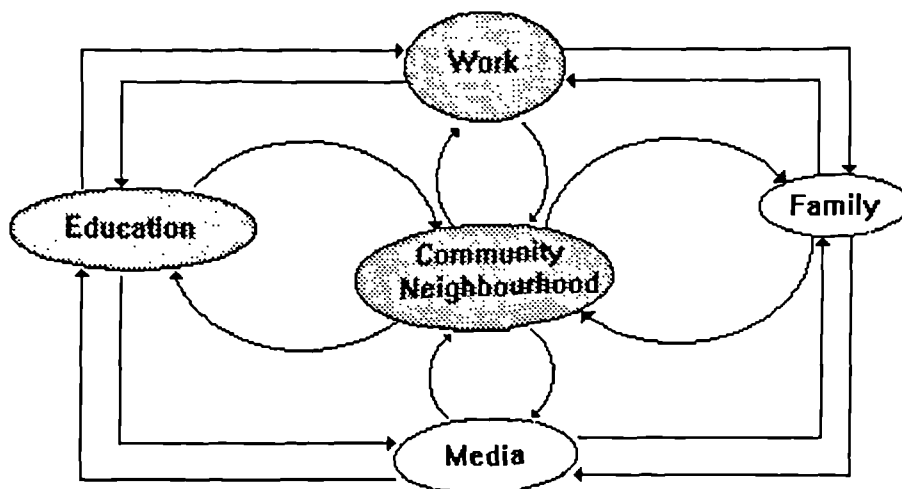
It is neither appropriate nor realistic to assume that there should be large public expenditure in tackling urban decline in MIS. The government will not be able to perpetuate themselves by means of encouraging dependency among the people of MIS. Instead, main efforts must now turn towards the integration of local residents into the economic structure of the city of MIS.

### 9.2.3 The Key elements

The idea of the city as culture, as an integrated model of urban life, consisting of a dynamic system with some interconnected elements illustrates a general behaviour of the city. At the same time each element has feedback and interaction with the other ones. Such an interaction is embedded in a sub-system. This means that each part of this system has a particular role in the system, but this role is not fixed and static. Rather it is dynamic and each element is influenced by other parts in a systemic way. The whole system attempts to generate and support social cohesion and cultural unity rather than generating and celebrating differences, tensions and conflicts (see Chapter 5).

The elements of the city as culture, indeed, are the key elements for policy making in this stage of the research. The ideal model presented in Fig 9.4 intends to show how the key elements of the city influence each other and what are the relationships between them (Fig 9.3).

**Fig. 9.3 The Key Elements of Urban Life and their Interaction**





As Fig 9.3 shows, education, community-neighbourhood, work, family and media have been centred in the dynamic model as the key elements, with a multidimensional characteristic. All these five elements are important, but the weight of each one may vary in different situations. This means that the attention to all these factors should not necessarily be equal always. The important point is to obtain a reasonable balance between all elements to provide sustainable condition. To achieve the proposed sustainable urban regeneration we need to pay adequate and careful consideration to these key elements.

In the existing situation of MIS, community-neighbourhood, education and work are more strategic than others. As the data shows, the stability of the family, in MIS, is better than the national average (see Fig 8.4). Also the findings of the empirical research confirm this idea and illustrate favourable family relationship based on kinship and moral values. On the other hand, according to Iran's constitution and some law based rules and regulation the scope of media activities are not completely free. In accordance to the law, media and press should not insult cultural values and people's beliefs. Although this is a contestable issue, it is not in the scope of this research. However the role and position of media in Iran is more a matter of national rather than local policy. Nevertheless, we consider media at the local level in the policy approach.

However, the thesis suggests that community-neighbourhood, education and work elements should be considered seriously. Before dealing with the policy approach we propose, we need to explain and clarify the role and characteristics of planning activity in the process of policy making.

### **9.3 The Alternative Policy**

The policies recommended here may provide the basis for a human use of capital and the opportunity to create places where economic growth is not the only definition of the good life. People need the opportunity to build economies to suit their lives rather than structure their lives to suit the economy. It should be noted that the following policies are some illustrations to clarify our policy approach for regeneration of the city of MIS, more precisely. The alternative policies are concentrated on the key

elements of the conceptual model of the city as culture: community, education, work, family and communication.

### 9.3.1 Community-Neighbourhood

Because of the strong social relations between the clans and families in the form of community-neighbourhood, community development can play a crucial role in achieving urban regeneration objectives in MIS. As mentioned earlier, the clan-based community neighbourhood is a key element of the social structure in MIS. Kinship and shared socio-cultural background generate strong social relations between the residents of neighbourhood. But this important social capital has neither yet been understood nor employed sufficiently. This increasing human potential needs management and co-ordination for flourishing and positive effectiveness in development. A great attention should, therefore, be paid to community neighbourhoods in MIS. To achieve such objectives the following policies should be initiated.

#### *Highlighting the role of Community neighbourhood in urban policy*

Regarding, the role of neighbourhood in the MIS city, it would be obvious that it is more than just a physical part of the city. Rather, it has also social and cultural characteristics in urban life. In other words, community-neighbourhood has been considered as an area-based focuses for social development rather than an individual group-based focus. More importantly, for the following reasons Community Neighbourhood are more effective factors to create a significant role for neighbourhood in urban life.

Firstly, despite the separation of population on the basis of class and occupational stratification during the domination of the Oil Company on the city, as emphasised earlier, after the revolution, the neighbourhood has found its real potential in urban life, although such a potential has not yet been employed effectively.

People participation, in the context of social, cultural and political activities, as a very important function of community-neighbourhood has been emphasised in this approach. This is likely to be facilitated where residents with similar socio-culture

backgrounds and social interests could involve close characteristics and attempt to co-operate and participate towards a better life (Gans, 1962; Fischer, 1984).

In terms of religious beliefs, the notions of the consensus and trust can produce and improve, and find their real meanings in such a living place. Therefore the neighbourhood could play a key role in the MIS city to create a favourable environment for the growth of moral values in the society. Thus, such an environment should be created to support and empower trust and consensus between the members of any community-neighbourhood in the city.

#### *Moral and Socio-Cultural Empowerment through the Mosque*

The Mosque has a special position and function in all Islamic cities, and in MIS as well. The mosque not only is a holy place for praying and worship, but it may be used as a place for social, cultural even economic activities. The mosque is not merely a physical place; it is a place for social relations and social mobilisation. It is where people come together for the shared meanings and reasons. They meet each other every day, respecting shared values and customs, exchanging their information and increasing their knowledge. There is no owner of a mosque but God, and for Muslims the mosque is God's home. So, it can facilitate adequate conditions and also create a good environment for most social activities. On the one hand the existence of the mosque is rooted in cultural and religious beliefs of people, and on the other hand, it is connected to social events and activities. The worthy experience of revolution and long term war in Iran clearly showed this multifunction capability of the mosque. Along with religious practices, the mosque was the main centre of political activities, educating emergency actions (First Aid), and military defence, economic activities, like distribution coupons for foods and fuel, during the revolution and war. So, this capability should be deeply understood and considered in public policy making and local strategies.

In MIS, like other cities of Iran, there is at least one mosque in every neighbourhood (see Fig 2.3b). These mosques should be allocated as the centre for most community activities in the neighbourhood. One of the main aims of a cultural

policy should be to help local communities to improve and develop the existing mosques and set up the new ones, if necessary.

### *Community Education*

Community education is an essential factor in the process of people's participation and an integrated part of community development. Community education is the process of helping people to understand the reasons behind issues and improving their ability to explain the ideas and initiatives.

The representatives of the local residents should be given the opportunity to acquire an adequate level of knowledge from independent sources of advice and consultancy that will allow them to understand and if necessary to challenge the proposals put to them by experts. At the same time, useful up-to-date information about the present situation and the future plans for the community and city should be given to residents through media, public meetings etc. This a crucial task to give real and honest information to people to convince them about the policy and plan, to benefit from their support and to stimulate them to participate. At the same time, such activities can improve trust and motivation in the society. To achieve these objectives we should:

- involve local residents in identifying issues, problems and potential solutions
- help local people to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence to participate in policy making and take the initiative
- assist local residents to organise themselves to gain a voice and power within the decision-making and political systems.
- encourage and improve the existing social relations in community-neighbourhood.

### *Community Participation*

Community participation in the process of policy making and implementation is one of the most significant factors in both the community development and the

achievement of the policy. This means that community participation policy brings about, on the one hand, accumulation of people's resources and capability for policy making and on the other hand provides their support in implementation process. of the policy. Community participation could be facilitated in MIS, by the formation of the Council of Community-Neighbourhoods and the Council of the City. The City Council may be elected by the members of neighbourhood councils. This can make a link between neighbourhood and the city level organisations. The representatives of the city governance are the members of these councils in both levels. To support social cohesion and reduce social conflicts and tensions in the community an Elders Advisory Council can be established in neighbourhood for consultation with community members on personal problems. Such an organisation can reflect traditional values and practices using religious and cultural norms as an integral part of community development. The organisations that are rooted in the culture can bring together the capacity and attitudes of the members of community.

#### *Community Co-operation*

As the main economic initiative, we should facilitate and stimulate local residents' involvement in local economic development, through community co-operation. This policy aims to bring community members together, accumulate their human and material resources, setting up businesses which are owned and controlled by the community, and at the same time, helped by governmental financial and technical supports.

#### **9.3.2 Education**

Indeed, the education system, as a key transmitter of knowledge and values, on the one hand, facilitates teaching and learning leading to the growth of people's knowledge in terms of science and technology. And on the other, it can generate and increase moral and cultural values in society. So, on the one side, it is related to values and attitudes, and on the other side to family, community, work and media. So, this research focuses on education as one of the most significant elements in a policy framework for increasing human capacity in the society for achieving urban

regeneration objectives. Thus, it is essential to clarify the role of education and its relationships with other elements more precisely.

#### *Education and Culture (Attitudes and Values)*

Education should help people to improve their knowledge and skills as well as empowering them to tackle their own deficiencies, and to see themselves in relation to their own contemporaries and the way in which they act for the future.

More specifically, education should create a deep knowledge and understanding of culture including traditions and religion. This can generate a shared system of meanings in society and also increase individual's commitment to their cultural values. This means that shared attitudes and values will be transmitted through education. This can help to bind groups together and gives individuals a sense of social integration and co-operation. Subsequently, the force of cultural values as a major source of human capacity will increase. This has been identified in this thesis as an essential factor in urban regeneration. This will be employed as the driving-force of urban regeneration. At the present time such an objective is followed through the national curriculum and education policy in Iran. At the local level the connection between the mosque and the school is an important factor to support cultural values and improve people's knowledge simultaneously. Establishing Educating Adult Centres in the neighbourhood level can be another policy integrated with community development and improving social relations and people's knowledge as the sources of development.

#### *Education and Family*

Regarding the interaction between school and family, many argue that the condition of the family can affect a child's achievement in school through the psychological processes within the child. For instance, conflict at home may affect school success because it might first reduce the child's motivation to succeed or reduce the amount of energy the child has available for homework and study (Ryan and Adams, 1995). Evidently, some particular parent characteristics and behaviours can affect school success.

Considering this general concept can illustrate a comprehensive picture of the essential relationship between home and school as the two most important and basic institutions for human development. This means that a rather close relationship between education and the family should be provided. Such a relationship is beyond a formal annual meeting between parents and education authorities. Instead, the interaction between home and school should be considered seriously in the education system and curriculum. In other words the more the connection between home and school the more the academic achievement and moral improvement. To achieve this in MIS, one of the most effective policies is to attempt to choose teachers from the same community-neighbourhood as pupils', or at least from the Bakhtiari tribe. Such relationships link the private family life to a broader social relations. The policy should be to try to find various reasons to make links between home and school. This can be found in the same economic interest, social events, religious practice and so on. For instance a good connection between school and mosque can improve the relationship between parents and teachers and also help children to know traditional and religious beliefs and understand the relationship between home, school and society as a whole integrated system which each element support the others. For example, using the school as a base for adult socio-cultural activities and traditions (such as sport, wedding ceremony, etc.), or for work training activities in the evenings and holidays, could be suggested.

### *Education and Training for Work*

Are schools the servants of technocratic efficiency? Or, should education follow its own aims and objectives. The answer to this question has been the subject of a big debate during the last decades, in many nations around the world (Bowles S., and Gintis H., 1976). In the present study a combination of both ideas is recommended, i.e., 'education for both work and life at the same time'. On the one hand, as a response to work demands, children should be educated in a form that stresses training in the jobs and skills that are most needed in the real economic and technological world. On the other hand, the education system and contents should be autonomous of it and must follow the goal of schooling at any conditions, i.e., providing a schooling

for life in general, improving moral and cultural values and increasing pupils' knowledge.

In MIS, there is a great number of educated and skilful people. As the formal data shows, education figures in MIS have always been more than national average (see Chapter 8). This great potential should be considered and employed for urban regeneration. The existence of numbers of technicians and skilled-workers who are ex-employees of the Oil Company, and now are retired or unemployed, is a big opportunity for the economic regeneration of the city. As an urgent policy, such people and their qualifications should be identified. At the same time the material and environmental resources of the area and the possible appropriate economic activities should be specified. And then, in a consistent way, some training and education courses should be set up for preparing these people for those specific economic activities. Of course, in this policy, doors should be opened for all residents who are interested and capable to attend the course. This policy should be examined in harmony with the economic policy for the small business development sector which is explained later.

#### *Equal education opportunity for all*

Undoubtedly, people participation in the form of individuals, groups and communities in the processes of decision-making is closely linked with the extent of their knowledge, education level, training opportunities and professional experience. So, as earlier mentioned, education and training are the significant elements of urban life. They can promote learning opportunities to increase people's knowledge and improve their confidence to participate actively, in all aspects of their personal and social lives.

With this respect one of the main issues is discrimination and inequality between people on access to education facilities. In MIS, we should attempt to provide equal educational opportunity for all residents at all levels. Furthermore, at the early stages perhaps we need to consider some positive discrimination policies to fill the existing gaps between different areas. This means that the policy should be to provide equal facilities and qualified teachers and technology for all schools in different neighbourhoods in the city. Perhaps reducing (and removing) the existing inequalities



between could be one of the responsibilities of the City Council. At the neighbourhood level, the council should investigate for those children who could not attend the school adequately and try to solve their problems and facilitate their regular attendance.

### 9.3.3 Work

The work-strategy should deeply consider both the material and human resources available in the area, for most efficient work, economic benefits and social mobilisation. This objective is based on the endogenous development strategy. The following policies are recommended to achieve such a strategy.

#### *The Development of the Co-operative Activities*

The policy should be to facilitate community participation in economic activities. This policy is quite relevant and interconnected to the community development approach. Developing *Co-operative* actions can bring both economic activity and social capacity together towards economic development and social improvement. The co-operative businesses should be supported by the government to start up and also subsidised in the early years of establishing. The co-operative business is based on community neighbourhood, where local residents work together to establish the business, run it, work for it and share its benefits and profits. This means that co-operative actions, through granting interest-free loans or recourse to any other legitimate help neither results in the concentration or circulation of wealth in the hands of a few individuals or groups as private sector, nor turns the government into a major absolute employer as public sector.

Strengthening the small business sector at the city and neighbourhood levels is recognised as the most convenient economic activity which is in harmony with other policies recommended here.

#### *Development of the Small Business Sector in the city*

In societies like MIS, with a great potential for social relations and skilled people, and due to the nature and specification of small firms supporting and

empowerment of the small business sector is recommended to provide adequate conditions and opportunities of employment for all local residents.

Having identified characteristics and specifications of small firms through the literature, it was decided to explore and evaluate the existing situation of the small business sector in MIS. The author wished to investigate the interaction between cultural values, social relations and small business to achieve economic regeneration. Such a challenging study has been researched through a combination of an empirical work and a qualitative analysis.

Through the empirical survey of small businesses in MIS, (see Appendix 3), it became clear that, in the existing situation, development of the small business sector in the city can be addressed as the most effective and efficient economic policy to bring material resources and human capital close together to achieve economic regeneration. The findings of this survey suggest the following key points:

- The family plays a crucial role in the three aspects of ownership, management and labour-force. The members of the family are the employees of the small businesses. The results support the idea that “family kinship” and “social relations” are the two significant elements in the small business sector. Of course, “trust” is the common moral basis of both the social relations and family kinship.

- The research showed that social relations and networks of friends and relatives have been more important in the achievement of small businesses than formal network organisations. A significant factor in establishing a business is access to sufficient capital. The results showed that in the city of MIS, social relations can play a great contribution in providing the capital needed for a business start up. These figures also showed that in obtaining business information, small firms used the web of friends and colleagues. These were more important than family and tribal kinship. The considerable contribution of social relations and networks of friends in the economic achievement of small firms is visible. In this way, a business can improve people’s local knowledge rather than that available through the family alone.

•Religion may influence small business in different ways, through shaping the owner's general worldview and life. In many aspects, religious beliefs direct, control and stimulate individuals for certain activities. Through the preceding part of the research it was noted that the people of MIS are mostly Muslims who feel a commitment and obligation to their religious values. It might be said that religion as a part of people's cultural values plays a key role in people's lives. This generates specific views which influence their economic activity and business, and encourage co-operation.

Overall, it can be said that while the social relations seems adequate to run small firms in the area, lack of knowledge together with government co-ordination and financial support and a stable economic conditions are the most important factors for the expansion of these firms in the city. However, the development of the small business sector in the city based on community-neighbourhood (as an adequate policy) can be a complementary part of community development and endogenous development. Small business policy can bring both social and material capital together for economic development.

#### **9.3.4 Family**

Since the family is the fundamental unit of the society, all laws, regulations, and pertinent programmes must tend to facilitate the formation of a family, and to safeguard its sanctity and the stability of family relations on the basis of cultural values. With this respect, the government should create a favourable environment for the growth of woman's personality and the restoration of her rights, both the material and intellectual; the protection of mothers, particularly during pregnancy and child-rearing, and the protection of children without guardians; establishing competent courts to protect and preserve the family.

#### **9.3.5 Media (Communication)**

There is also a close relationship between the media and other aspects of social life. Education creates a potential in individuals to seek access to media, such as newspapers. Media, in turn, increase people's knowledge and information and also stimulate people to improve their education level. Media, itself is also used as an

adequate tool for educating purposes, economic information and political activities. At the same time they have a significant impact on people's culture. In a normative way, media should support people's cultural values consistently. They can create shared understanding of life and a shared system of meanings in society. However, such an understanding, as attitudes, can contrast with people's traditions and values. Or, it can be in harmony with deeper layers of cultural values, as our model emphasised. In this situation, education and media, both together, should create a consensus and shared understanding of social life and in particular urban problems and the ways to tackle them.

In MIS, the media should be used as an adequate tool for exchanging information, improving local knowledge and increasing real communication between people, and between people and decision makers and planners. It should plan to establish some local media which are run by local people. This can include radio channel, newspaper and TV programme. Such a local media can encourage people to discuss and participate in all aspects of social life (such as education, environment, work, etc.) in the existing situation and for the future of their city. This will improve human capacity in the society, facilitate maximum benefits of people's potential and increase urban regeneration achievement. At the same time, at national and regional levels media should be act in harmony with the local media.

### **9.3.6 The Role of the Government**

In fact, all these policy initiatives need the government, mostly local, to co-ordinate and organise the process and the progress of activities. In the first step the government should be involved in a very serious and supportive way. It is important to note that at the early stage of each of the above policies, the active intervention of the government is vital. But the government should transfer the authority and control of the scheme to the local residents as soon as possible. Furthermore, some general policies should be examined by government at national level to support local policy initiatives. The central government should create appropriate rules and regulations to

support diverse experiments in co-operative ventures, self-help schemes and community enterprises.

The government should provide appropriate conditions for participation of all relevant actors in the processes of plan-making. This means that we need to adopt a multi-agency approach in public policy making. In other words, all departments and agencies should participate in the plan to establish a joint collaborative presence in the area which they are working. All participants should work together in the area, with local people, whose future is at stake. They should have a good communication with people, teach them and learn from them in all processes of policy making and implementation.

Convincing local people, through community-neighbourhoods and citizenship, that they can have real influence over the plans and decisions may often be difficult task, in the presence of suspicion and mistrust of the motives of external public agencies promoting participation. So, the government should give local people an opportunity to shape the strategy at the early stage. This helps to build trust and good relations between participants, and provides a positive reason for people to participate.

Organising and conducting surveys of local people including individuals, households and community groups should be considered as an important task at different stages of policy making, in particular in the early steps. This can provide information on the main problems and priorities as perceived by residents, the extent of people's awareness and their participation in the policy making. Through such surveys and open-debates, residents can find the opportunity for developing participation, reflect on and discuss their ideas with politicians and decision makers. Moreover, if a few local residents are trained for conducting such surveys, survey work can also provide the basis of a process which gives local people a degree of ownership over what is done and what is happening in their city.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter sought to represent an appropriate approach for urban regeneration policy based on the integrated approach to cultural values, social mobilisation and economic activity in city life. The main thrust of this chapter is recommendation rather

than prescription; i.e. we attempted to provide an approach rather than a particular solution. Solutions, indeed, should be the last thing which planners should look for. Although the fact of the matter is that the planners, in their attempts to achieve the goals should think more deeply and look for the reasons beyond the visible problem alone. We wished to show how cultural values and social relations can be combined for economic achievement.

We are now confronting two options: the welfare state with the passive society, and the co-ordinator state and the active human agency. This study showed that, for many reasons, the first option does not work in MIS, any more. Indeed, as the research emphasised, preparing the conditions for generating initiatives and policies in all such fields in the city needs huge financial support from the government. Since the provision of such finance is not easy, the government's task may take many years and in many cases the achievement of plan and objectives would be impossible. Instead, what we need in MIS, is a co-ordinating, supportive state and a planning system to create the situations for cultural flourishing, improving social relations and local knowledge to increase social mobilisation in the society. Such increasing social mobilisation in the society, will lead to the employment of material resources and environment efficiently and sufficiently. With this respect, we wished to bring all the capacities, resources and human capital together to achieve integrated urban regeneration in MIS. The thesis emphasises human capacity, cultural development and social mobilisation and suggests a set of strategic policy for achieving endogenous development. Such policies may provide the basis for human use of capital and the opportunity to create places where economic growth is not the only definition of the quality of life.

# 10

## Conclusion

### 10.1 Introduction

In focusing on the interrelationship between culture and urban regeneration, this research has emphasised a broad perspective that looks beyond short-term urban policy. The history of the case study of this research has been brought in to provide a deeper understanding of urban changes occurring in the city. Whereas much of recent literature on the cities in decline has concentrated on economic and demographic data and their associated policy issues, the theme of cultural values in the urban context has been taken up in this investigation. The whole structure of the study has been based upon a premise that solutions to mounting urban problems are incomplete and ineffective without a consideration of cultural and traditional values beneath the surface of the contemporary city.

The thesis began with the description of the existing situation of MIS, as the first city with an oil based economy, in South West Iran, which is now suffering high unemployment, deprivation, an inadequate urban environment and many other urban problems. Yet some thirty years ago, during the rich oil days, MIS was one of the most urbanised and developed cities of Iran.

Reviewing the story of the discovery of oil in MIS by Europeans in the early 19th Century, together with explaining the technical, economic and political

domination of westerners, in particular the British, over the city and the residents, has clarified the consequences of this significant socio-economic and cultural event.

The discovery of oil brought about on the one hand some positive effects, such as job creation, rising income, economic growth, the provision of educational and training centres, transportation and urban infrastructure facilities. On the other hand some negative results occurred such as the creation of social classes and social segregation, destroying the traditional self-sufficient economy, and replacing it with the domination of western culture and consumption patterns in the society and city. The exhaustion of the oil resources caused a heavy socio-economic shock to the oil industry and consequently to the city and local people. The rich oil days have been replaced with a difficult situation for MIS; the activity of the oil industry in the city has dramatically declined. This has affected all social and economic aspects of the residents' lives. In other words, almost all economic benefits and positive effects of the oil industry have collapsed, whilst negative effects have developed (see Chapter 2).

This research aimed to explain the reasons behind the existing urban problems and to set them in a wider context, as well as prescribing the possible solutions. As the first task, the dominant approaches in both theory and practice have been reviewed to find out the most suitable policy framework to fit the case study. Such a review showed that the analysis of urban problems had two main gaps. First, current urban studies and initiatives have mostly focused on economic urban outcomes and improving standards of living rather than on urban processes and considering the moral and cultural values in defining quality of life and as a driving force for achievement. The second gap was the lack of attention to giving a competent role to people in producing plans and decision making, as in giving them a real voice and a way of contributing to an improvement in their quality of life. This gap will not be filled unless people's culture, as their way of thinking and acting, based on their values and beliefs, is considered in urban strategies. Of course, such a consideration needs a precise anatomy and philosophy of culture and its role in people's lives and urban regeneration. Thus, we need a more broad and integrated approach to urban regeneration which enables us first, to present an adequate definition of quality of life, and development; and then to explain the way of achieving this (see Chapter 3).



Developing such an idea led to a rather sweeping and fundamental investigation into philosophy, sociology, and planning, because it was believed that understanding human nature, our capacities and needs required both a comprehensive worldview and an adequate methodology for thinking, investigating and making decisions. In this context, “*hermeneutic realism*” was recognised as the most convenient method of thinking and studying; and the “*unity of being*” approach was presented to clarify our understanding of the world and human beings as a part of that. Through a sociological debate, we understood that “*culture*”, as the way of thinking and acting, has a significant position in social life. It has been clarified that culture is based on some shared system of meanings and beliefs in the society which were termed *values*. Also, culture has been defined as the “*glue*” of the society; i.e., in the absence of culture, the society will be without shared meanings. Having these basic conceptions, it was necessary to focus down on the area of the research. However, first we required two intermediate steps. The first was a need for a theoretical concept in planning as a guide to understanding and to acting in the context of city. The “*human capacity building*” approach has been presented to cover that enquiry. In this concept we emphasised that the *unifying* culture, in some societies like MIS, together with the *human resources*, can generate *social mobilisation* and cause environmental changes. “*People* “ were located at the centre of the concept; to achieve planning “*with*” people rather than “*for*” them (see Chapter 4).

The second intermediate task for focusing the research interest was the city. This required a link between the philosophy and worldview, the debate of culture and people, and the concept of planning and human capacity. All these notions have met each other in the model of “*the city as culture*”. In this model we have clarified the meaning and components of the culture. In the model of the city as culture an attempt has been made to show how cultural values can generate social mobilisation in society and can act as the driving force of environmental changes (see Chapter 5).

Then, as the first step of focusing on the case study, it was necessary to find a way to access the views of local residents. This was essential for two reasons. First, they had been previously identified, in the alternative model, as the centre and main element of planning and policies. Second, we needed to communicate with people to

know their culture, to show whether their culture was unifying, and what were the relationships between their cultural values, their attitudes and their socio-economic conditions. The results of the empirical part of the research have been analysed through statistical methods for further investigation. The findings have demonstrated that there is still a strong *unified* culture which dominates the society. Further, an ideal structure was recognised for the culture consisting of “*layers*” on different levels. It has been emphasised that studying the society and urban life needed to distinguish between such different layers of understanding, the lower layers including more unifying shared values than the top, which consists of more diverse attitudes (see Chapters 6 - 7).

Considering such a conceptual foundation about the world and human beings, society and culture, planning and city, together with our findings about people’s values and their attitudes towards the city, provided a new broad understanding of the city and its problems. At this stage, we needed to return to the city and review the problem through the new conceptual window. Re-considering the evolution of MIS from the period of the discovery of oil up to the present, has made clear that the factor of cultural transformation during the domination of the oil industry accompanied with the western culture has had serious impacts on the economic decline of the city. That meant that the cultural changes in the citizens of MIS, during 50 years of domination by foreigners over their lives, dramatically decreased both the human capability (with the exception of particular technological skills) and social mobilisation of the society. The active producers of the past had been transformed into passive consumers. The people who had previously built their environment had been changed in a way which allowed the environment to build their lives. And the people with unified cultural values, social unity and strong social relations had been changed into individuals who sought their own preferences and maximised their own benefits. So, it has been emphasised that the decline of MIS had started many years before the exhaustion of oil; i.e., the decline had begun when the oil industry started to grow (see Chapter 8).

Finally, the research focused on the link between the theory, survey findings, formal documents and MIS’s problems. This task has been examined through clarifying the role of “*human capacity*” in the development process as well as the role of cultural

values in increasing human capacity. Borrowing some key concepts, the research has concentrated on “*knowledge*”, “*social relations*” and “*motivations*” as the key elements which increase “*social mobilisation*” in the society. We also have illustrated that all these three elements were rooted in people’s cultural values. This meant cultural values could act as the generator of social mobilisation and consequently, as a driving force for socio-economic regeneration.

The research has suggested that an integrated and broad view of urban policy initiatives is needed. The targets are multiple including social, cultural and economic objectives, rather than narrow rational material ones. The human capital, which plays a key role in this thesis is available in MIS in a reasonable form. Dominant unified cultural values, the generation of trust and strong social relations in the society are the most important human capital which could improve local knowledge and consequently increase the social mobilisation of the local residents. We required to create an adequate environment and pre-essential conditions accompanied by a government and planning system acting as co-ordinator to achieve the aims of socio-economic regeneration. So, the research suggested community, education, work, family and media (communication) as the key elements of social life which should be considered seriously for a quality of life. We emphasised community development, education improvement and strengthening the co-operative and small business sectors in the city for achieving the proposed goals (see chapter 9).

## 10.2 The Research Questions and the Findings

This research has had both theoretical and an empirical dimension. The significant findings of the research as a response to the research questions can be outlined as follows.

- 1) This study has attempted to show that there are strong inter-relationships between social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of urban life. They are interconnected and influence each other in a dynamic systemic way. The research has emphasised that considering a particular dimension in the absence of other dimensions

could be an obvious mistake in a social research generally, and in urban policy making particularly.

2) The overall understanding and analysis of the nature of modernity that the Oil Company brought about in MIS, can be summarised as a process of rationalisation of the economy, bureaucratisation of social and formal relations, and the liberalisation of the society. It was constituted by contradictions, complexities and conflicts and resulted in fragile temporary economic growth, cultural transformation, social segregation and environmental changes. This means that the Oil Company provided economic growth and environmental improvement in the city of MIS, but at the price of cultural changes, and social tensions; i.e., the economic growth neglected cultural development.

3) The research suggested that human social life is shaped by culture. Indeed, no society can be formed unless people hold shared values and systems of meaning. If individuals act according to their own preferences we never have an integrated society. Thus culture as the *glue* of the society is an essential part of social life. Culture must be considered in all aspects of urban life. This research emphasised that cultural values play a significant role in the inter-relationship between social, economic and environmental dimensions of the city. The emphasis here was not on culture in a unidimensional sense, but rather on the complex, multidimensional transformation of the city by social, political and economic forces. Culture, in this research, has been defined as a set of values, attitudes and system of meanings generating the way of thinking and acting in the society

4) In the context of development and quality of life, this thesis stressed that the definition and elements of these notions needs a broad understanding of human nature and needs in both individual and social aspects. We pointed out that material development and economic growth is just one side of development and achieving quality of life. On the other side we emphasise the development of humanity, moral and cultural values. In the absence of moral and cultural values, the research emphasises, economic development will not be sustainable. Urban regeneration, therefore must be considered as a social, cultural and economic activity. We can not achieve real and sustainable urban regeneration only by focusing on economic targets such as job

creation and raising income. Together with economic improvement, urban regeneration should provide an appropriate environment for cultural flourishing and the growth of moral values in the society, continuously.

5) Developing a model of *city as culture*, this thesis suggested *family, education, work, community-neighbourhood* and *media* as the most significant elements in a city from a cultural viewpoint. The research emphasises that all these elements are interconnected and influence each other in a systemic way. They are the transmitters of cultural values in the society. The model also illustrates the role of people's attitudes in their behaviour and actions, and also emphasises that people's attitudes are shaped by the proposed elements of urban life.

6) This study has emphasised the role of cultural values as the *driving force* of urban regeneration by revealing the central importance of cultural values in social solidarity and social mobilisation. The research has pointed out that the growth of morality and cultural values can improve shared understanding and create consensus in the society, which in turn can rectify social relations as well as the local knowledge of the society leading to a more efficient use of the material resources and changing environment. Rich cultural values are capable of acting as a magnet for economic growth. Such cultural values have the capacity to generate co-operative energies in projects that enlarge shared amenity spaces, creating new opportunities for work, and to protect family structure as well as maintain a healthy living place for communities. The study of MIS showed that rich cultural and religious traditions have the capability to provide alternative models of economic development as well as considering their cultural and moral values. In these hybrid outcomes, we may find ways and means to examine the dichotomy of society versus the individual and to achieve a balance between morality and materialism.

7) Taking the small business sector as an illustration, it has been demonstrated that, in MIS, like in many other cities around the world, employment, market information and social relations, in small business, are based on inter-personal, family, tribal and citizen relations. Indeed, family and tribal kinship, and friendship networks together with religious relations have created culture-based behaviour among

individuals in MIS. Such personal and social links can preserve and protect the business in difficult circumstances.

8) The economic achievement of the small business sector in MIS, is significantly dependent on the traditional and cultural values and solidarity networks among the local people. Lack of sufficient information and knowledge about the business as well as inadequate strategic management ability to anticipate the long term interest of the business has been one of the main reasons for unsuccessful small businesses. The results of interviews with the small business owners in MIS showed that the economic problems of the country and the high inflation rates have created a low level of confidence and an insecure environment for business owners in the absence of organisational support.

### 10.3 Implication for Analysis

The current investigation has sought to build its argument on an acceptable philosophical logic and methodological foundation. This idea has raised some conceptual and theoretical issues, as follows.

1) *Ontology*: the question of “which system is good for human beings providing them a quality life and favourable sense of well being” has arisen since mankind began to improve his social life. Indeed, this question is deeply rooted in the question of the priority of individuals or society. The problem of making harmony between those two essential parts of human life has driven humanity into a long struggle in the ideological and political fields, and into different kinds of conflicts, and of various intellectual doctrines that seek to establish and construct social conflict. In this concern, at the initial step of thinking and acting towards public policy for urban regeneration, two key elements should be considered, the first is the method of thinking and knowing and the second is the notion of the world. These help to understand the problem of how to identify the objectives of public policy.

2) “*Epistemology*” defines the method of thinking and investigation. That is, it answers the questions of “*knowledge*”, “*the scope of research*”, and “*the starting*

*point*". The methodology of this research was based on an integrated approach to social science which considers *facts* and *values* simultaneously. The position taken in this research is that, knowledge is a result of investigation for the "*Truth*". The truth is a notion of fundamental, invariable and permanent absolute rules, facts or values. For example: "the Earth turns around the Sun" is a true fact, while "justice is desirable" or "Aggression is bad" are true values. They neither depend upon our knowledge and perception nor change through the time or space. Truth is not relative, what is relative is our knowledge and (or) our perception of the "truth". We can never understand the whole truth; because as human beings, we have some limitations and inability such as *time*, *space* and our ability to make representation, which are surrounding the *material* nature of us. These limitations mean that we are unable to overcome the obstacles to understanding the whole truth. So, our knowledge is always a part of the truth.

3) "Fact" is a matter of "*what is*", and "value" is a matter of "*what ought*". Whilst many social scientists (Positivists, Materialists,...) claim that social science is concerned just with "facts" and whatever can be observed or practised, this thesis has been based on the belief that some notions are beyond observation and practice, like values, culture and beliefs, need to be considered to understand human nature and social life and hence in the design of public policy. This means that "social science" should be concerned with "facts and values" in an inter-related way, because the notion of "values" has been a key subject in terms of "knowledge" and "evaluation" in this context. This particularly appears in the context of social policy which seeks to advise on how improvements to social conditions can be made.

4) Talking about society, we have presumed a sustainable and strong social system based on shared values and system of meanings among individuals as members who feel commitment and obligation to such meanings and follow the rules and principles. The more people hold unified shared values, the more sustainable the society. Culture, along with the discussion of values has found its significant position in the constitution of the society. The study has defined culture as a main element of what we recognise as society. It is believed that in many societies, like the case study of this research, unification and social cohesion are visible rather than cultural diversity. Human beings as agency, can change existing systems and structuring forces,

but these transformations can not be achieved by individuals by themselves. The power of individuals are shaped and given meaning by the social unity. Indeed, social unity generates social mobilisation leading to an improvement in human capacity that produces changes and improvement in the existing situation (structure) which change the society.

5) We have supposed that culture consists of various layers on different levels. In the ideal model presented here, human values have been located at the foundation of the building of culture. Religious values and then traditions have been placed in the middle and finally the individuals' attitudes have been located on the surface. Indeed, the higher the layer the more diversity and instability, the lower the layer the more unity and stability. It should be emphasised that when we talk about cultural diversity, we are expecting to treat the top layer of culture called here attitude. And, when we referred to unifying culture we mean the whole body of culture of a society as a single unit including diversity in the top and unity in the bottom layers; i.e., bringing the layers into harmony. So, the research attempted to show such a unity exists in the case study area, hence should be considered as a significant fact in public policy and urban regeneration strategy.

6) The "*human capacity building*" approach is based on *human development* in the three areas of: "*motives and emotions*", "*reasoning and knowledge*", and "*action and behaviour*". All these aspects of humanity are rooted in culture and the shared values of the society. In this research, "*development*" is not limited to physical, economic or environmental improvement. Rather development is a process of improvement in all aspects of human life, material or moral. Development is a set of harmonious changes in various parts of the society leading to political, social and economic improvements in quality and quantity. The synthesis of such changes is improving the social and individual life of human beings. This is here called human development. In this approach the aim of planning depends on the definition of human nature and its needs.

7) In the model of the city as culture, presented here, cultural values have been seen to be present in all aspects of urban life through the elements. This means that family, education, neighbourhood, work and media transmit cultural values from a



subjective domain to the objective areas of urban life. The cultural values flow through family, education, work, media and living place and lead to shape people's attitudes. The attitudes, along with the condition of quality of life shape what people consider to be their well-being. The thesis has stressed that social unity is the result of cultural cohesion and common sense. If there was no cohesion in cultural values, then people would be in confusion and tension. They would have neither a common sense of well being nor a shared experience of unity, and no source of mobilisation.

8) Cultural values together with kinship generate *trust* between individuals. Trust is the vehicle of social relations. This means that generating and increasing trust leads to an improvement in social relations and local knowledge as the two important human capitals. This improves social capacity rectifying social mobilisation in the society. In fact, trust provides a bridge between social relations and knowledge; while, social relations and local knowledge are interconnected. The stronger the social relations, the more there can be exchange information and experience and consequently, the more knowledge. On the other hand, the more the knowledge of the environment, the more the shared understanding of each other, the more positive social relations will be. At the same time social capacity (relations) together with intellectual capacity (knowledge) create a great potential and capability in both the society and individuals for causing changes and improving the quality of life. However, the empowerment of social relations leads to the strengthening of social unity, and the improvement of intellectual capacity causing an improvement in the capability of individuals.

#### 10.4 Conclusion

As a conclusion, in the cultural context, the longer term sustainability of cities will rest on their capacity to generate new role for socio-economic institutions, such as family, education and work, their capability to transmit cultural values and galvanise collective energies to reverse many of the trends appearing over the past few decades, which have led to social inequality and dispiriting cultural values. To achieve such aims the following strategies recommended to be applied in MIS, or any other city in similar conditions.

1. Urban regeneration planning should seek to improve all aspects of urban life. It should include, on the one hand, employment, education and training, health, housing, and economic development, and on the other hand it should support and improve, moral and cultural values, religious beliefs, family stability, and crime prevention. This means that economic development must arise from social and cultural development. In other words, one single aspect of economic development could not improve human life sufficiently.

2. The city should be seen as a basis of natural resources for human use, and the opportunity to create places where economic growth is not the only definition of the quality of life. The priority of culture to the economy in the process of urban life should be strongly established.

3. Religion should be recognised as a major source of human values, at least in the case study of this research. Religion is a social institution with certain messages, commands and programmes for human life in both individual and societal aspects. Religious people are educated to know their “self”, naturally and spiritually, the world around them, and the world of hereafter. Thus, in many cases, the action and behaviour of religious people can be anticipated, if the religion’s messages, rules and commands are to be well understood.

4. The solutions to counteract urban decline according to the results of this survey should lie in the generation of sustainable wealth in the city that cannot be easily removed by economic crisis, changing technology, or political forces. Understanding such a form of wealth must include the empowerment of local people, the flourishing of moral and cultural values, knowledge, skills, commitment as well as providing financial capital and tangible assets.

5. Local people must be considered seriously in policy making. They should be involved in the processes of policy and decision making. Decision makers and planners should give them a real voice in what affects their life. Considering people means that we should go back to people because we need them. They are not just a part of the plan, but they are the main resource as well as the end of the plan. In other words, we, the planners and decision makers, need people, rather than they need us. This mission is impossible unless we believe in such a meaning, feel responsibility and obligation to do according to what we claim. We should consult with people, listen to their suggestions, and try to

understand them. We need to know well people's cultural and moral values, social norms and their religious beliefs. It should be then considered that urban regeneration is not only about jobs, income, crime, education, health and housing, but our own conduct as planners, that we should be concerning our *self*. If we treat people with respect we shall be equally concerned about their traditions, their history, their identity and appreciate these through plans and policies. This means that we must adopt a people-based way of acting, which gives voice and respect to the people who actually experience and suffer the problems. With a socio-cultural and economic oriented, local-problem focused and people-based approach, this mission would be possible.

6.As for the transformation of its economic base, MIS should lead to a shift away from mass production of oil with a high degree of economic needs and use of semi-skilled labour towards a pattern of more flexible production, with a more prominent role for small businesses and a co-operative sector based on local people's investment and abilities. The emergence of self-contained, relatively autonomous work groups should be organised. A central feature of the city's economic fabric is the change in the pattern of employment from large scale manufacturing for oil sector to the small businesses sector based on local resources and demands.

7.Local economic development as one of the two aims of urban regeneration approach addressed in this study, should be achieved through the empowerment of local communities, encouraging local people to participate and co-operate in the development of local small businesses . In this socio-economic activity, the leader from an economic point of view, is neither the public sector nor private sector, but it is the "co-operative sector". This implies a kind of endogenous development based less on government and more on the contribution of local people. In this model, cultural factors are accepted as important for understanding cities and their economic development (or regeneration). By considering people, we can integrate human development as well as cultural and moral values in local development. It may lead to consider the dominant people's beliefs and their cultural values in technology, development, competition and challenge for a better life. Perhaps we, as planners, will be able to achieve such a vital task.

8. The strategy for local economic regeneration, focused in this study, is to be the development of local small businesses and co-operative firms. In fact, the local authority should provide an adequate environment for community development, encourage people to participate and facilitate the constitution of co-operative groups helping local people and communities to invest, establish and run a business. At the same time, the central government should provide financial aids for small businesses, in the form of loans, loan guarantees, interest rate subsidies and public acquisition preferences

9. The government should consider people's cultural values and traditions in all plans and projects. The public spaces, the media, the education (system and content), and the work relations should be co-ordinated in the path of admiring, supporting and strengthening such shared values and beliefs. Of course, to understand the shared values between people, a continuous systematic communication with people is vital. This should be facilitated through establishing community council in any neighbourhood as well as city council in the city. This will give real voice and power to these communities in planning and decision making processes. This policy will protect values as well as increase human capital and social relations and integrate all thoughts and skills for regeneration objectives. This, consequently, will lead to the development of the social mobilisation of the society

10. Development of culturally appropriate community-based organisations should be considered in order to establish a new role for the co-operative sector in the urban economy. The existence of strong social relations based on family kinship and tribal relationship has provided a rather appropriate condition for the development of the co-operative sector in the city. The proposed communities in the first point can be the bases of establishing the co-operative sector in the neighbourhood. The process of growth and management of this kind of co-operation requires technical, clerical and some administrative support, not bureaucracy.

11. As the research demonstrated, the role of family in the growth and maintenance of cultural values is rather crucial. Thus, as a long term plan, the government should support the establishment of the new families, as well as the provision of particular public policies to improve family structure and its stability. This will also increase the social capacity of the society.

12. The families which belonged to a particular tribe, in MIS, live close to each other within the same place as neighbourhood. So, such a neighbourhood has a key role in people's life. Tribal relations through extended families are formed in these neighbourhoods establishing the communities based on kinship and tribal relations. Although, at the present time, these tribes are mixed together, still the structure of neighbourhood as a place-based community plays a significant role in social relations, thus reinforcing the neighbourhoods and communities in the city is an important policy for increasing social capacity in the city.

13. The government should co-operate with the local people in building a shared information base to support small business. Technical information can play a significant role in management and become a shared intellectual capital for all small firms owners. This can be developed at the national level to support all small firms in the country, at the same time, it provides a pre-essential training course for applicants in starting up a small business. And, allocating the financial and technical support in the condition of attending such training courses, will encourage people to attend the courses. This, in turn, will increase applicants' knowledge, improve human capital in the city and increase the chance of success in their economic activity.

As a final point, this thesis makes it clear that economic regeneration alone will not bring prosperity to MIS, and similar cities. In other words, sustainable development is not summarised in economic growth. The concept of quality of life recognises that standards of living cannot be measured by purely economic indicators or treated by simple quantitative growth of income or employment rate. Much greater attention must be paid to investing in human capital as an effective strategy for long-term socio-economic regeneration. Cultural factors such as traditions and social relations and family relationship must also be considered seriously.

New human resource strategies must be constantly developed, and new forms of partnerships among communities, government and other institutions should be developed as well. Improving human capital strategies should be a part of all national economic development programs and local planning efforts as.

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## Appendix 1

### Illustrations



## Appendix 2

### The Questionnaire

#### 1. General information

Gender	Age	Marital Status
Education level	Occupation	Family Size

2. How much is your monthly expenditure?

3. How do you spend your free time?

4. If you find a holiday opportunity which city do you wish to go to?

5. Where were you born?

6. If you were not born in MIS, when have you moved in MIS

7. Are you from Bakhtiari tribe?

8. In your opinion which one of the following choices has the most important contribution to child rearing?

A) Home	B) School	C) Both
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9. What do you think about the conditions of finding a job during the last 3 years (since 1992), in MIS?

A) Improved	B) No changes	C) Got worse
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10. What do you think about the future of the job opportunities situation in the city, for the next three years?

A) will be improved	B) "won't be changed"
C) "will get worse"	D) no idea

11. What is your idea about this comment: People with extended families and relatives can find a job much easier than others?

A) Agree

B) Disagree

C) No idea

12. In your view, what is the most important factor in finding a job in MIS?

A) Education level

B) Training qualification

C) Family and relatives

13. In your opinion, what is the most important factor in starting up a small business?

A) The Government

B) The Family

C) The person

14. Do you agree with working women (mothers)?

A) Agree

B) Disagree

Why?

15. In your opinion, which urban problems are the most important in the existing situation of MIS?

A = Drinking Water

B = Healthy Environment

C = Unemployment

D = Housing

E = Living Cost

F = Education

G = Recreation Area

H = Training

I = Transportation

J = Crime

16. Do you think, the residents of MIS would like to participate in public planning and policies?

16. Are you satisfied with living in MIS?

Yes

Somewhat

No

17. Do you wish to move out from MIS?

Yes

No (in No, go to Q.19)

18. Why do you wish to leave MIS?

19. Do you agree to women (mothers) going out to work? Why?

20. What is the best public policy, from your viewpoint, to tackle economic problems of MIS?

21. In which of the following occupation are you capable to be involved?

Technical / Oil industry / Self employed / Office work / Agriculture / Breeding

22. Do you wish to improve your academic education level? Yes No

23. Do you feel an obligation to support young or deprived people? Yes / No

24. Would you like to participate in religious occasions, funeral and wedding parties in your city?

A) Very much B) Some what C) Don't like to

25. Which kind of dress-wear do you like more?

A) Traditional dress B) Both C) Modern (western)

26. Which kind of music do you like more?

A) Traditional tribal B) National C) Modern (western)

27. How often do you speak with your tribal accent?

A) Very often B) Sometimes C) Seldom

28. Which kind of names would you like more to choose for your children?

A) Religious B) Ancient Persian C) Modern

29. Do you have time or money to spend in volunteer aid and charitable activities? Yes No

30. Do you feel any obligation to support young people and relatives (in economic aspects), or it is better to leave them by themselves? (if No, go to Q32).

31. To what extent do you wish to help young people and relatives?

32. Could you please rank the following criteria as the most important criteria in choosing a partner from your viewpoint.

A) Religious & Morality B)Income C)Education Level  
D)Family Background E)Tribe F)Other criteria.

33. Do you normally consult others, especially elders, in your major decision making? Yes No

## Appendix 3

### **Small Business: An Alternative Policy For Urban Regeneration Through Human Capacity**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether and how cultural values can act as an effective driving force of urban regeneration policies. In the preceding parts of this research, an alternative definition of urban regeneration has been presented followed by an explanation of culture and the role of cultural values in urban life. In the case study area we communicated with the residents to understand their ideas, wishes and needs, as well as exploring their cultural values.

This section intends to make a linkage between theory and the practice. We are going to show how proposed alternative approaches to urban regeneration and cultural values can be combined and work together for presenting an efficient urban regeneration policy.

#### **Small Businesses: A socio-economic Scheme for MIS Regeneration**

In recent years small business studies have been well considered in the context of entrepreneurial and business networks. Some commentators (Lazerson, 1990; Butler and Hansen, 1991; Bryson, *et al.*, 1993) emphasise that business networks reinforce the flexibility and competitiveness of small firms. The small businesses managers and owners develop their business through long term relations and by exchanging information rapidly. They get up-to-date market information about new products, services and marketing through such networks.

Whilst a great attention has been paid to show the advantages of small business in the economic context such as job creation, innovation and economic growth, the body of literature in the context of social networks is not quite so large and rich. Further, many network studies have failed to evaluate the role of cultural and moral value, social relations, local ties and knowledge which affect the formation of networks in the small business sector.

This study attempts to clarify the economic features of small businesses in MIS, in the first part. Secondly, the study emphasises the important role of cultural values, the family and tribal kinship and the citizenship in formation and maintaining small businesses in MIS, through social relations.

### **Small Business: Description and Characteristics**

Small businesses have been characterised by many economists and social investigators through different viewpoints. Many believe that small firms are not homogeneous, rather they are different in function and characteristics. The Bolton Report (1971) described a small business as:

- “In economic terms, a Small business is one that has a relatively *small share of its market*.
- It is managed by its owners or part owners in a personalised way, and not through the medium of a formalised management structure.
- It is independent in the sense that it does not form part of a larger enterprise and that the owner/managers should be free from outside control in taking their principal decisions” (Quoted by Burns, 1996 p. 3).

Burns (1996), emphasises that the owner’s values and attitudes will affect all aspects of his small firm. This means that business decisions will often become personal decisions that are based on the personal attitudes and values of the owner, rather than the expected logical result of the balance sheets and scientific information.

Some commentators believe that whilst small firms are unlikely to be able to play a significant role in their market, they can be rather effective in the general economic

picture of the city, or even in the national level (Curran, et al., 1986; Atkin, et al., 1993; Barkham, et al., 1996; Burns and Dewhurst, 1996).

They argue that the small firms are not public establishments, even when they are supported by the government. However, one of the strategic problems of these firms is seeking for financing resources through formal ways such as the government and banks. They are mostly successful in the provision of financial supports through informal means such as family and friends.

In comparison to large firms, small businesses are rather flexible and mostly single product establishments, so they are more influenced by market changes than the large firms. At the same time, because of the personal relationships of the small firm owner's and the wide accessibility to information, they often perceive a market opportunity that larger companies do not. Furthermore, due to the high dependency of the owner on his small firm for his livelihood, this can highly stimulate him towards making a success of the business.

### **The Role of Networks in Small Business**

Most of the western literature in the context of small businesses emphasise the important positive role of networks in the successful small firms. Bryson *et al.* (1993) believe that the small firms in the UK, through personal and business relations, have been able to compete with large firms. Butler and Hansen (1991) emphasised that both extended social and inter-organisational strategic networks created successful start up and continuing competitive advantages. In Italy, Lazerson (1990) showed that family relations and social networks have made a considerable contribution to the success of small firms.

On the other hand, some investigators indicate that business networks have not been analysed and well conceptualised in theory nor applied in practice efficiently. Curran *et al.*, (1993), through investigating 350 small firms in the UK, concluded that networks and networking associated with executive managers of enterprises have not been efficiently applied among their small firms. This research showed that social relations and networks of friends and relatives have been more important in the achievement of small businesses than formal network organisations.

## **Small Businesses in MIS**

Having identified in such characteristics and specification of small firms, it was decided to explore and evaluate the existing situation of the small business sector in MIS. I wish to investigate the interaction between cultural values, economic regeneration and small business. Such a challenging study has been researched through a combination of empirical work and a qualitative analysis. The aim of this part of research is to show how social and cultural factors influence the nature and achievement of small businesses.

### **The Empirical Research on Small Business in MIS**

This supplementary part of research was conducted after the main empirical study in MIS. Some 15 questions were designed and structured in the form of a questionnaire. At the time of investigation (Summer 1995) there were about 500 small firms in the city. 45 businesses out of all had more than five employees, which were our target in the study, 39 small businesses were open and doing their normal activities. An attempt was made to interview all the owners/managers. Finally, the research succeed to interview 32 small firms, about 82 percent of all existing small firms (with more than 5 employees) in the city. The firms activity are mostly concentrated on small industries such as producing foods, cartons, and kitchen furniture, some worked in animal breeding and a few in services. At the same time, a large number of self-employed businesses which worked in the commercial sector as running a small shop.

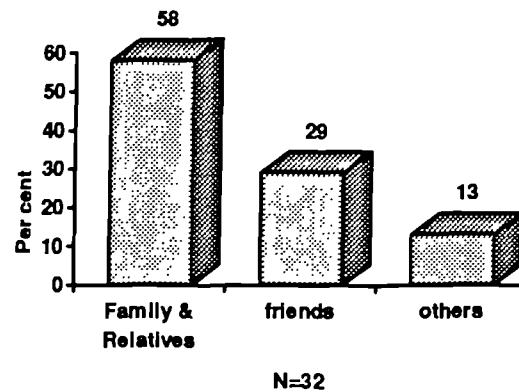
Here, the research focuses on seven questions to illustrate the impacts of family, tribe and citizenship together with cultural values on the small businesses. The questions, answers and the findings of research are as follows.

#### **Family**

The family may affect small firms in many ways. Research, in the last decades, has clearly emphasised that the family ties and relations, as social capital, have an important role in the establishment and growth of the small firms (Ozcan, 1993; Sanders and Nee, 1996, Metcalf et al., 1996). They distinguish the role of family in the three aspects of ownership, management and labour-force. Research also shows that in

many countries, the members of the family are the employees of the small businesses. This figure was measured for the small businesses in MIS (Fig. 9.3)

**Fig 9.3 The relations of the owner with the employees of the business**



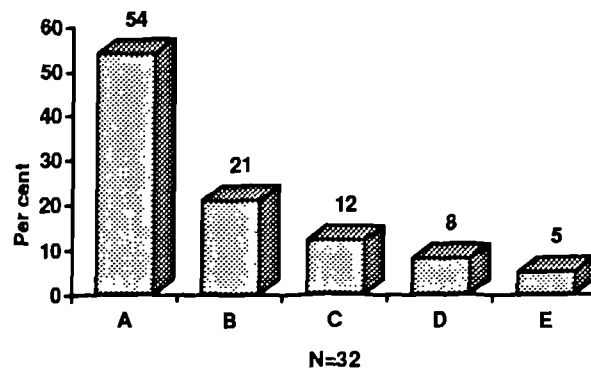
The findings show that about 58 percent of the owners employed their family members or relatives in their firm. Whilst 29 percent said that their employees were their friends, only 13 percent stated that they did not know their employees before starting to work. This figure supports the idea that “family kinship” and “social relations” are the two significant elements in the small business sector. Of course, “trust” is the common feature of both the social relations and family kinship.

### **Why Family and Tribe**

In the next question the managers of the small firms were asked to state the general reason(s) for dealing with family members and relatives (tribe) in their business.



**Fig 9.4 Reasons for keeping family & relatives in the business**



A= Obligation to keep family and relatives in work  
B= I can trust them  
C= Family and relatives support me in times of difficulty  
D= Keeps family together  
E= Better worker

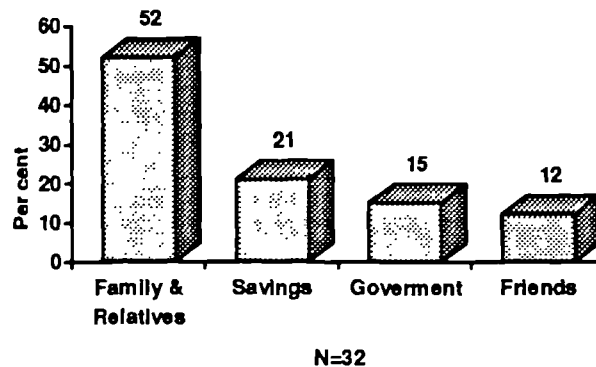
The results show that there is a high commitment and feeling of responsibility towards family and relatives. More than 54 percent believed that they had to support the family and friends to get jobs. 21 percent of the respondents emphasised that they could trust the family and relatives. 12 percent stated that such a decision was a response to their family support in starting up the business. While 8 percent emphasised that this was good for family solidarity and only 5 percent said they were better workers. Such reasons, generally, emphasised the significant interaction between family, relatives and the business. Assistance, trust, support, and family solidarity were all kinds of values which are common in the MIS society.

It would be useful to add that the families which belonged to a particular tribe, in MIS, used to live close to each other within the same place as neighbourhood. So, such a neighbourhood has a key role in people's life. Tribal relations through extended families are formed in these neighbourhoods establishing the communities based on kinship and tribal relations. Although, at the present time, these tribes are mixed together, still the structure of neighbourhood as a place based community play a significant role in social relations.

## Access to Capital

A significant factor in establishing a business is access to sufficient capital. This survey asked respondents how they had financed the start of their business (Fig 9.6).

**Fig 9.6 How the business was financed in “starting up”?**

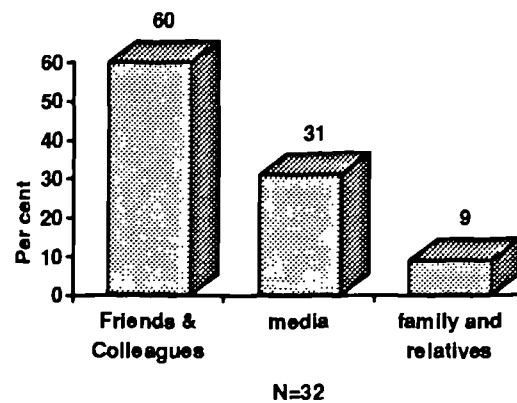


More than 50 percent of the total sample stated that the main source of their capital initially were the assistance and loans of their families and relatives. About 21 per cent did not require any funds to finance their business; i.e., they had enough savings to set up their business. Government loans were the financial source of 15 percent of the sampled businesses. And finally, 12 percent had received financial aid from their friends. If we add the fourth column (friends) to the first column (Family & relatives), it can be said that more than 64 per cent of the capital needed to establish a business had been provided through social relations and kinship. This fact means that in the society of MIS, social relations can have a great contribution in providing the capital needed for a business start up.

## Knowledge

Another important factor in business achievement is an adequate access to information and news.

**Fig 9.7 How do you access to the business information**

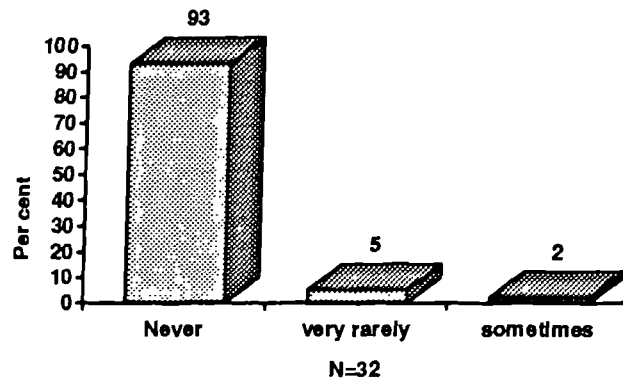


The results demonstrate that more than 60 percent of respondents believed that the sources of their information are friends and colleagues. This figure was 21 percent for media, including government, while only 9 percent said their source was family and relatives (tribe). These figure also show that in the business world of the small firms the web of friends and colleagues was more important than family and tribal kinship. The considerable contribution of social relations and networks of friends in the economic achievement of small firms is visible. In this way, a business can the basis of knowledge than that available through family alone.

### **Religious Values**

Religion may influence small business in different ways, through shaping the owner's general worldview and life. In many aspects, religious beliefs direct, control and stimulate individuals for certain activities. Through the preceding part of the research it was noted that the people of MIS are mostly Muslims who feel a commitment and obligation to their religious values. Usury is a forbidden economic activity in Islam, although evidently it plays a significant role in the modern economy. The owners of the small businesses were asked about this concern (Fig. 9.5).

**Fig 9.5 Have you had to lend or borrow money for interest**

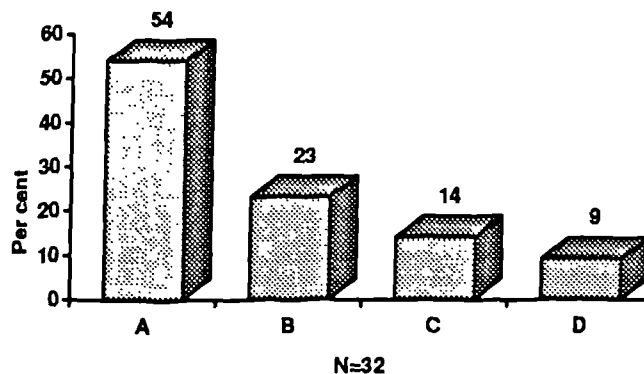


As the result shows, more than 93 percent stated “never”. It means that almost all respondents did not accept usury, at least explicitly. However, it can be said that religion as a part of people’s cultural values plays a key role in people’s lives. This generates specific views which can affect their economic activity and business.

### **The reason for setting up the small business**

To understand the position and how important the small firms are in the owners’ lives, they were asked to state their reasons for starting up the business.

**Fig 9.8 Reasons for setting up the business**



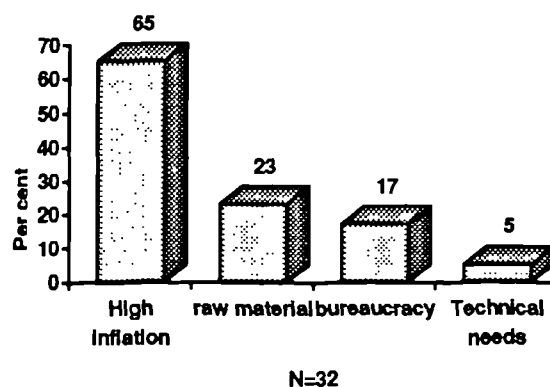
A= lack of job opportunity in the city and unemployment  
B= To increase income  
C= To be my own boss  
D= Other reasons

The findings show that the most common reasons were “unemployment” and the lack of job opportunity in the city (54 per cent). Whilst, 23 percent believed that the small firms could create more revenue for them, only 14 percent established their small firm to be autonomous. These figures also show the important role of small business in the MIS’s economy. Regarding the results of interviews with the ordinary residents it can be said that many people believe that the small business can be an effective and efficient alternative to attack unemployment and deprivation in MIS.

### **The Problems**

In the next question the respondents were asked to state the main problems in running their business (Fig. 9.9).

**Fig 9.9 What are the most important problems of your business?**



According to the results, 65 percent claimed that the high inflation rate in the country well affected their businesses. Providing raw material (mostly from abroad) 23 percent and the present bureaucracy in the public sector, with 17 percent, were recognised as other important problems. The need for technical information and scientific knowledge was specified as another important problem. This figure demonstrates that the achievement (or failure) of the small firms is also dependent on the national economic achievement. In the other words, if we have national economic development, then the economic achievement of small businesses in the local level will be expected.

It can be said that while the social relations seems adequate to run small firms in the area, lack of knowledge together with government co-ordination and financial support and a stable economic conditions are the most important problems for the expansion of these firms in the city.

### **The Material and Human Resources and for the Growth of Small Businesses in MIS**

The formal data regarding to the economic situation of MIS, explaining social and demographic characteristics of the residents, indicates a serious social decline of the city (The Employment and Social Affairs Organisation of Khuzistan, 1990). A comparative study of the economic situation of MIS and Khuzistan province also shows negative economic indicators for MIS (The Plan and Budget Organisation of Iran, 1994). It can therefore, be concluded that the economic decline of the city was not only the result of exhaustion of the oil resources and the Imposed War but also it was based on traditional roots and events coincided with the oil discovery in the area. This means social, cultural and economic reasons all proceeded in parallel and interacted with each other.

On the other hand, the regional planning authority of Khuzistan, in their precise and comprehensive annual report, for 1994, emphasised that the existing material and human resources in MIS are quite sufficient to allow the survival and regeneration of the city. The existing material resources have been reported as follows.

1. While the area of MIS is about 10 percent of the Khuzistan's (province) area, more than 14 percent, 53000 hectares of all fertile land in the region, is located around MIS. However, there are some topographical problems affecting access to the water of Karoon, the largest river of Iran. These vast areas of grasslands are very important and quite suitable for the growth of animal breeding and fruit cultivation, in particular olives and grapes. Due to a lack of adequate knowledge, a considerable amount of these lands has been destroyed by inappropriate traditional agricultural use. (The Khuzistan Natural Resource Organisation, 1991).

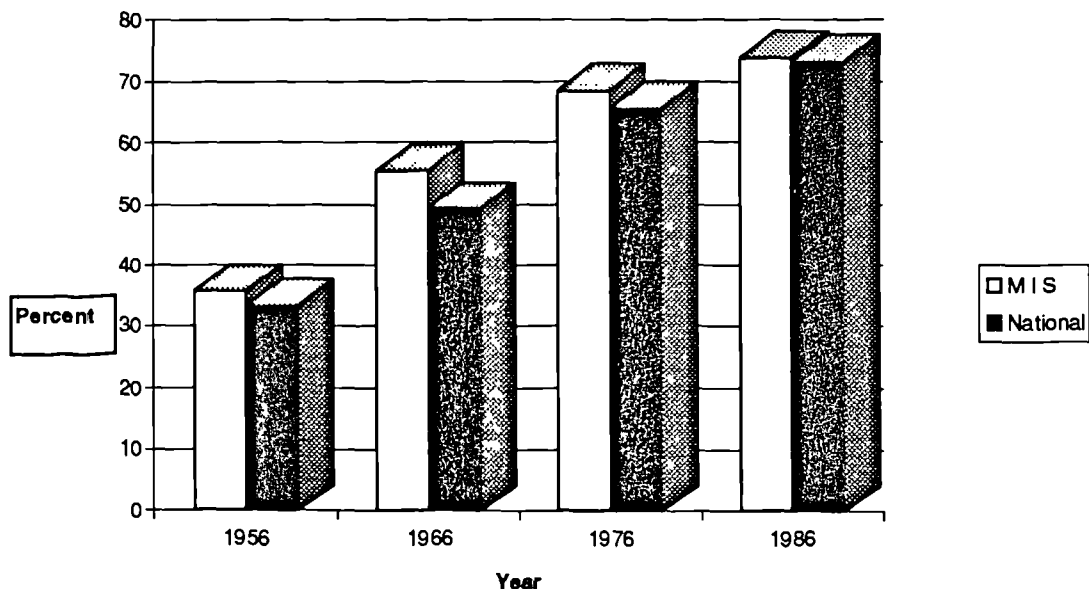
2. A huge amount of natural gas, if accompanied with re-opening the closed down small factories which had been established by the oil company many years ago, together with establishing some new factories in association with the natural gas, undoubtedly can provide a considerable amount of raw material for many small industries in the region. As a consequence, many jobs will be created in the city (The Plan and Budget organisation, 1985, 1994).
3. The second most important dam of Iran has been built over the Karoon river in just 40 Km. distant from the city. This is a great opportunity for supplying water for agriculture and fruit-growing activities in the area. And also, the supply system and management for the dam may create some jobs in the area.
4. The area of MIS has been surrounded by some natural forests. According to the official documents, the area of MIS forest is more than 85200 hectares. These forests are not very rich. Nevertheless, if they are being enriched and more trees be planted, they can be very effective in the creation of desirable weather as well as increasing rain in the area(The Khuzistan Natural Resource Organisation, 1991).
5. Huge mineral resources, including natural gas, stone, Calcium, Sulphur etc. provide a great opportunity for the development of small industries such as a match factories, carton (box) making, providing and delivering masonry material like tiles and cement, etc.
6. The available material and human capacity have provided a reasonable potential for the development of handicraft industry in the area; industries such as carpeting, traditional cloths, hats etc.

As to the human capitals of MIS, a great number of the former employees of the oil industry with a high potential of technical knowledge and rich professional experience now live in the city as unemployed people, retired or are working in an area far from their capacity (The Employment and Social Affairs Organisation of Khuzistan, 1990). This is a huge human capacity which has been forgotten and in the last decades there has been not a serious plan or project to employ them efficiently. The growth of

the small business sector can create a great opportunity for such capable residents to be employed in the right way.

The second important human capital is a high rate of educated people in the city. In comparison with the other cities of Iran, the number of the educated people in MIS has always been higher than the national average (Fig. 9.10). This figure shows the percentage of people with at least five years school attendance. This brings about another desirable condition for the growth of the small business sector in the city.

**Fig. 9.10 The Percentage of Educated Population in MIS & National**



As the most important factors in the small business sector, social ties and cultural values have an obvious presence in residents' lives. Family, tribe and citizenship are the three types of social web which create social relations and can support the establish most of small firms in the city.

The above material resources as well as human capital have existed in the area for a long time. But, in the last 50 years, there has been no strategic plan to disconnect the life of MIS from the oil industry. No one has believed that MIS can survive and



continue its life without the oil. Now, we need an integrated plan and policy to combine the human capitals with the material resources to achieve both human development and economic regeneration. Such a big aim will not be possible if it is left as the responsibility of government alone.

Overall, it can be said that material and social resources are mostly adequate in the city of MIS. This has provided a hidden potential for the development of small businesses in the city. But, some key problems still remained: the most important ones is understanding of all social, cultural and economic factors and their interactions which are involved in this sector. Second, managing and co-ordinating of the effects of these factors. In many cases some potential can affect each other in a negative way. For instance the human capability to change his environment can lead to a destruction of it. Thirdly, adequate knowledge including accessibility to the scientific and technical information, plays a very significant in this context, lack of such a knowledge as a serious shortage is visible in MIS. Fourthly, whilst social ties and relations are quite strong in the area, lack of adequate co-ordination and management has led to a neglecting and misusing this great social capacity. And finally, although local people are interested to participate in stabilising small businesses in the city, they have not enough finance to do. So, lack of financial resources for starting up the business is another important factor in this regard. So, in such a situation what should be done to sustain and develop the small business sector in the city? And how?

## **Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter sought to explain the role of cultural values in social solidarity, social mobilisation and economic activity in the city life, and how this could provide the adequate grounds for urban regeneration policy. As a practical example, we wished to show the relative influence of cultural values and social relations on small business achievement. This aim has led to examine to what extent small business is an appropriate alternative to socio-economic regeneration of MIS. From this viewpoint the following points can be outlined.

- The social relations between the residents of MIS, in particular between those residents who are involved in the small business sector, are formed by

shared values and traditions and common interests. Members of these social networks have to consider the dominant values and their responsibility in the network and their society. It means that business life in many instances is strongly plugged in to social, family and even the private lives of all the individuals involved.

- People involved in the small firms, get to know each other and build a common sense through families, tribes and citizen relationships which come from shared cultural values, and common traditional background and shared geographical identities. The relationships between the seller and the customer is also based on such social ties and relations. The customers have been allocated a certain credit to deal with the small business and the only guarantee, to pay the debt, are social ties. On the other hand, the customer trusts the businessman for quality products and the right price. So, it is very usual to see certain customers for a certain business. This means, engaging in small business activity helps to reinforce these existing social relations.
- The significant point which distinguishes the MIS from other societies is that the intermediate social institution is not limited to family kinship. Rather, tribal relations fulfil the form of a strong community network. Thus, the trust appears in the intermediate level of social relations. This is visible in the city level, while the business networks exchange their knowledge and products at the regional and national level.
- Tribal based community as well as family kinship, in both the nuclear and extended forms, well support small businesses through encouraging business start up, supplying financial assistance to the business, and providing quick and accurate information.
- Local businesses have been dominated by indigenous entrepreneurs. In fact, the owners' local relationships are very important for the success and the survival of their small firms.

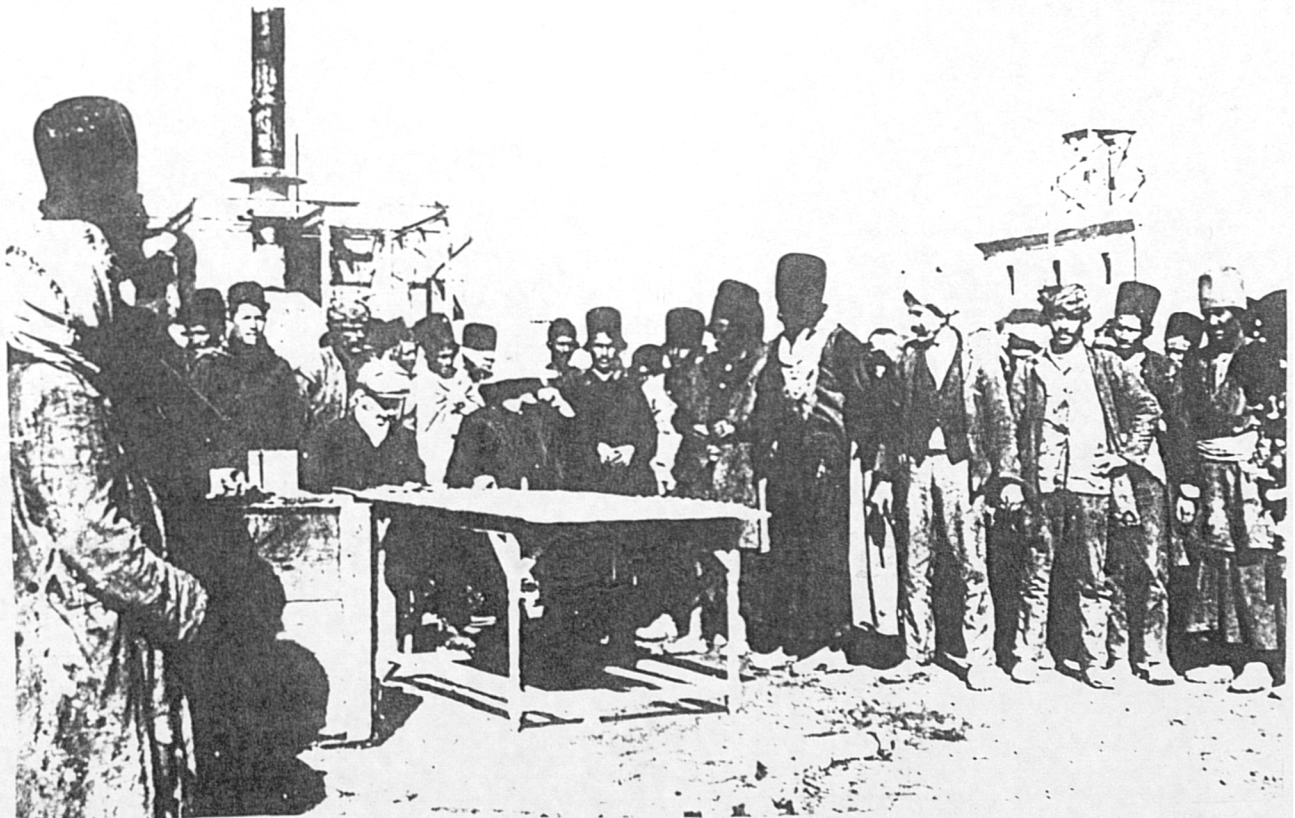
- Family ties are the most important local ties in small firms. Family relations offer an advantage for developing contacts and a reputation in the local market. Families support small firms in various ways. The family influence the entrepreneurs to choose a suitable business. Secondly, the family can be a source of capital and work-force. They support the business to start up; and also help the owner to manage it.
- The tribal ties are another important local tie influencing small firms. The shared family backgrounds and common traditions connect the members of a tribe together strongly. Such strong ties generate a great responsibility between the members of the tribe to help and support each other, in particular in difficult situations. This responsibility creates a considerable assistance in starting up a small business, and then in protecting it.
- The citizenship, the shared home city, is another local tie which is important in social relations and consequently in small businesses in MIS. Almost all of the owners of the small firms of MIS have been born in MIS. They feel a great responsibility about their city and try to support it. The owners of the small firm have a moral relation with the people who have been born in MIS even though they are living in another city. Such a strong relations normally lead to exchange their information, improving their knowledge and help to achieve the economic growth of the firms.
- Trust is one of the most crucial factors in small business development not only in MIS, but also in other cities around the world. One of the main consequences of trust is keeping the members of the family, relatives and friends together. They can create a strong social network to facilitate exchange their knowledge, preserve and spread their cultural values, as well as help each other in difficulties. These characteristics of trust are quite visible in the small firms in MIS.
- Religious identities also reinforce business relations. In many cases the religious status of people and their commitment to the religious rules and obligations create trustworthiness and reliability in their social relations. This

status in a small society like MIS, with a high potential of social relations, can be a basis for more social and economic co-operation. Religious values, within MIS's residents and businesses generate a unifying force on social networks of businesses in the local market. In many cases, the employer-employee and the seller-customer relationships are based on such religious obligations and rules.

This could be an adequate circumstance for the growth of small business in the city. But, preparing the conditions for generating initiatives and projects in all such fields in the city needs huge financial support from the government. Since the provision of such finance is not easy; the government's task may take many years and in many cases the plan and objectives would be impossible.

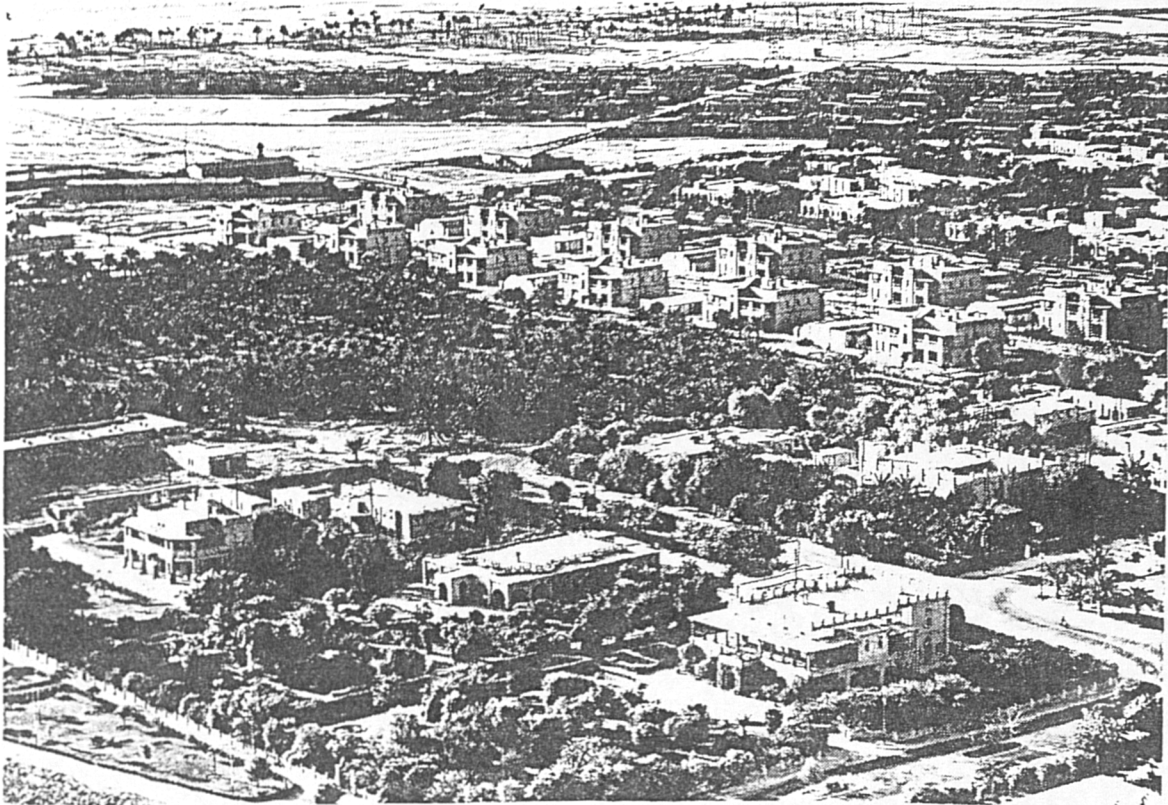
With this respect, we are now confronting two options: the welfare state with the passive society, and the co-ordinator state and the active human agency. This study showed that, for many reasons that explained here, the first option doesn't work in MIS, any more. Indeed, what we need in MIS, is a co-ordinator, supportive state and planning system to create the situations for cultural flourishing, improving social relations and local knowledge to increase social mobilisation in the society. Such increasing social mobilisation in the society, will lead to the employment of material resources and environment efficiently as well as sufficiently. The concluding part of this research outlines the policy recommendations of this path.

Changing self-sufficient people to simple manual wage-earner worker

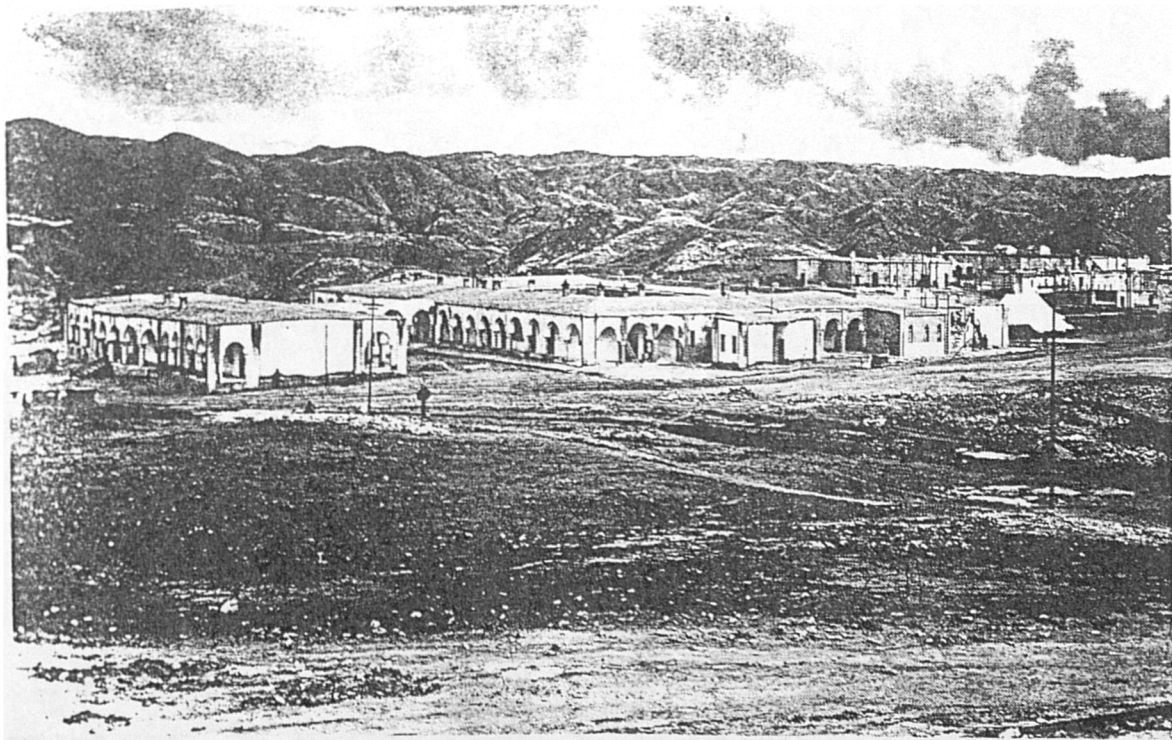


Source: Bamberg (1994)

## The Planned Oil Company Housing estate



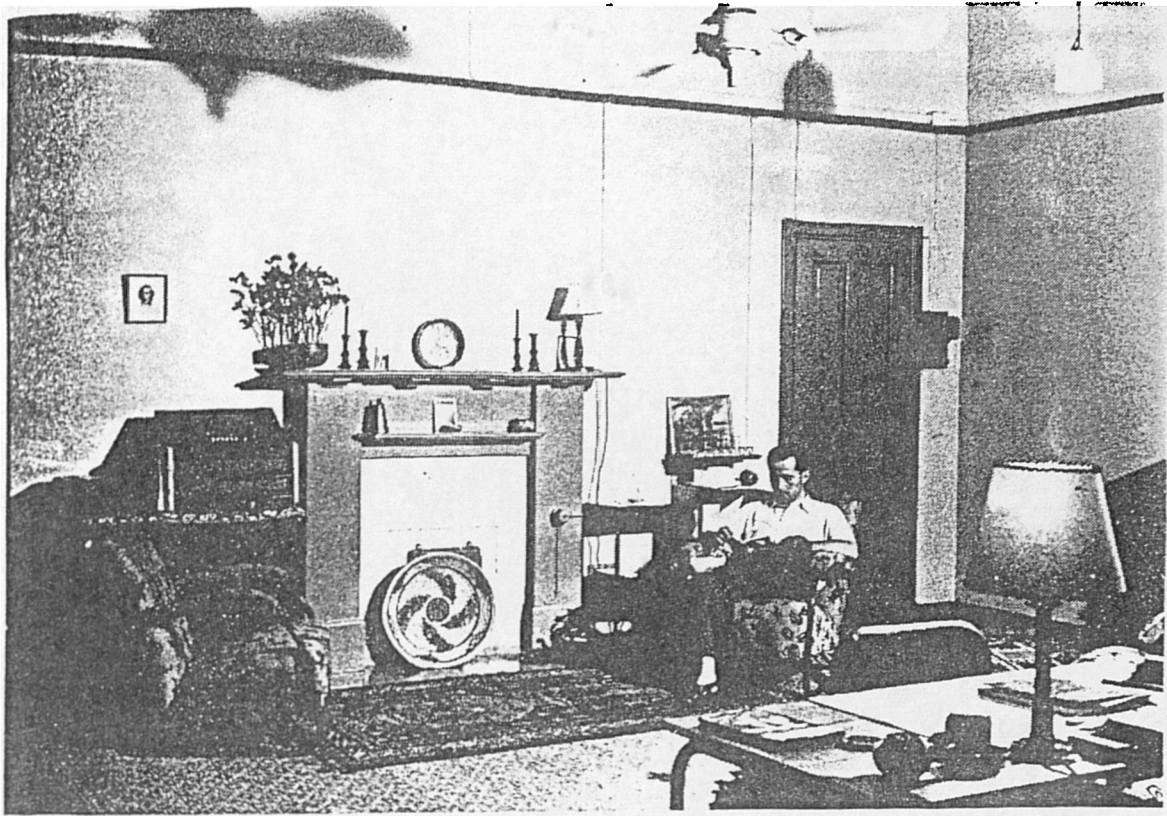
11 The Braim housing estate at Abadan, 1935



13 The Fields hospital at Masjid i-Suleiman, 1932



## The reflection of occupational classification in living place

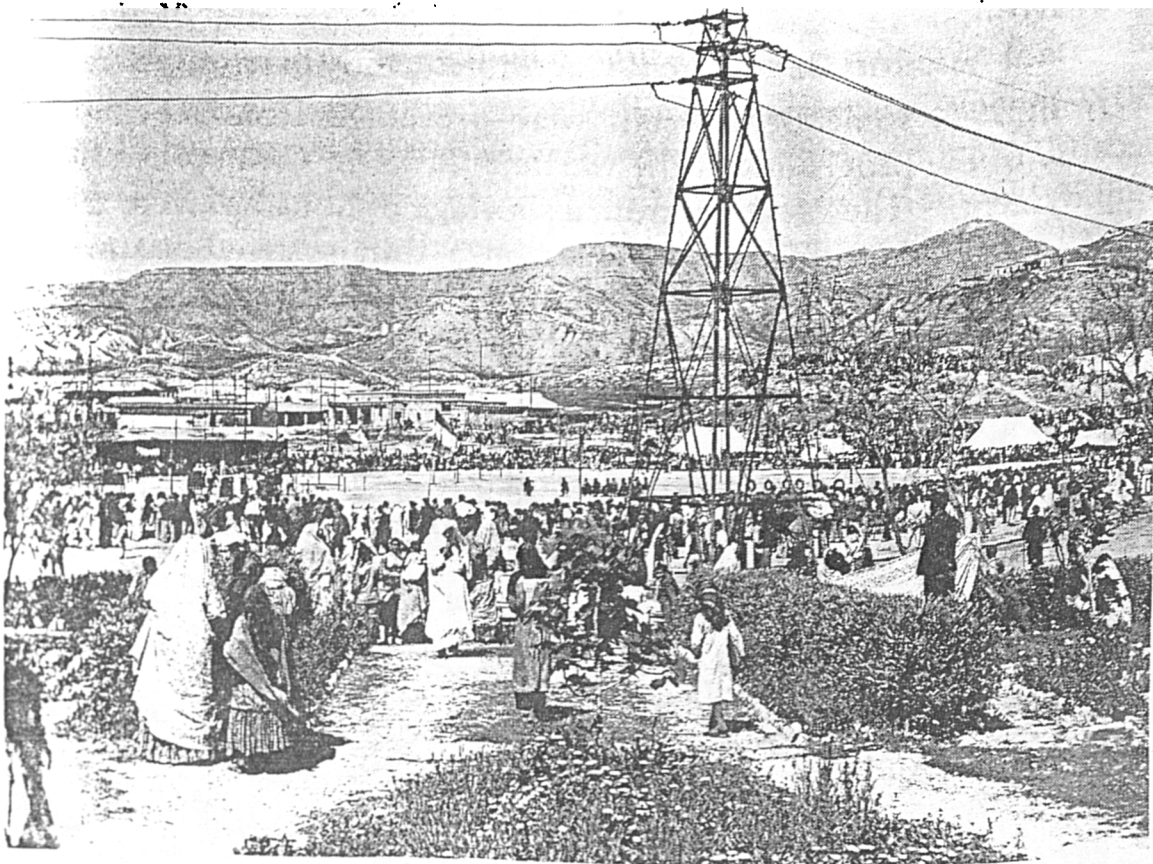


61 Senior bachelor staff accommodation at Abadan, 1950

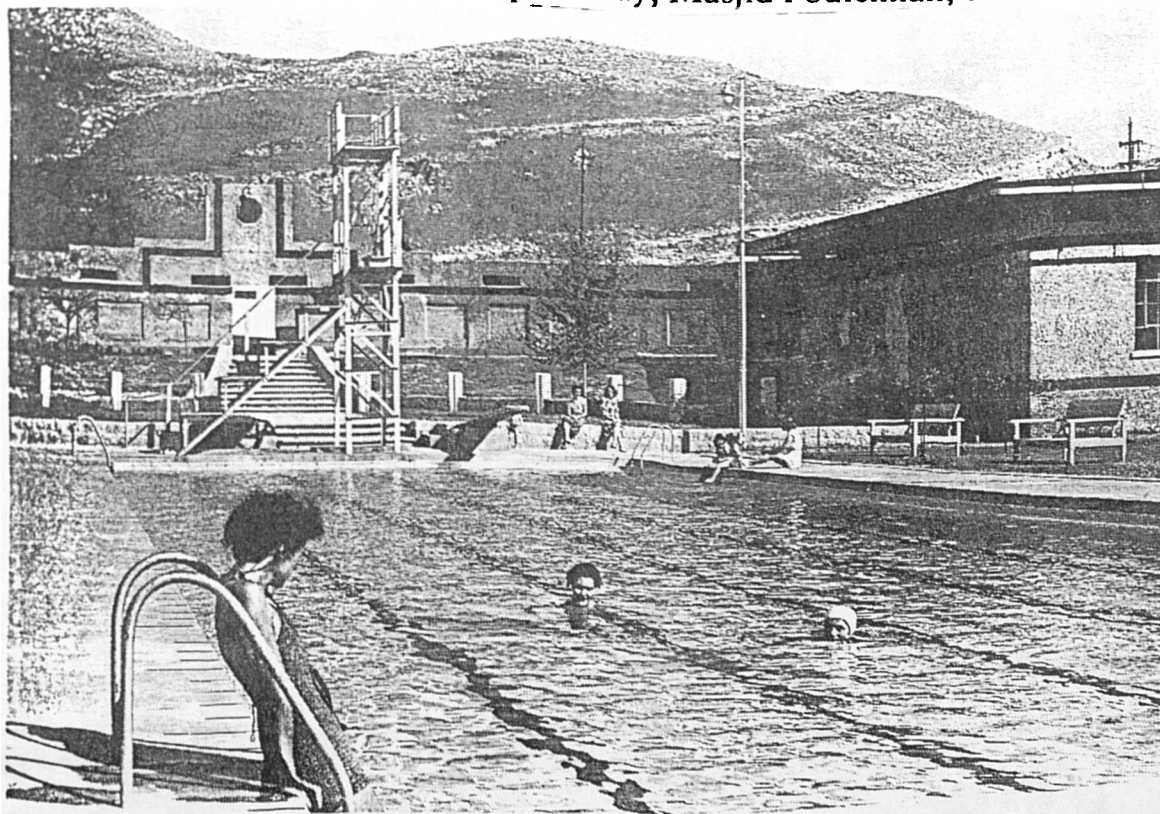


60 The type of room provided for junior bachelors on the Company's staff at Abadan, 1950

Cultural Confrontation  
Iranian-Islamic Values and Western Modernisation



64 No Ruz (Iranian New Year) sports day, Masjid i-Suleiman, 1949



65 Swimming pool, Masjid i-Suleiman, 1949

Source: Bamberg (1994)



**The First Oil well surrounded by unplanned-uncontrolled urban growth**

